

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF THE STEAMER *ED. F. DIX*

Introduction

On Friday morning, June 23, 1865, the sidewheel steamboat *Ed. F. Dix* struck the remains of the sunken ironclad *Eastport* on the Red River just below the small Louisiana river community of Montgomery. Within 20 minutes, the *Ed. F. Dix* had sunk into the muddy waters of the Red River. The *Dix* was carrying United States troops and supplies upriver to be used in the Union effort to quash the last Confederate resistance in Texas. The Civil War was near its end, the Red River area was in social, economic and political disarray as a result of the war, and people's concerns were elsewhere. As a result, little note was made of the loss of the steamer. In the nearby town of Alexandria, Louisiana, the local newspaper made only very brief mention of the sinking, simply stating that the boat was a total loss and no lives were lost (*Alexandria Louisiana Democrat* June 28, 1865). The *Ed. F. Dix*, and its loss, slipped into obscurity, unlike the boat that sank it, the ironclad *Eastport*. The *Eastport* had been a powerful United States Navy gunboat, and its forced destruction on the Red River a year earlier, on April 26, 1864, had been a devastating loss to the Union. The events of the *Eastport*'s destruction had been extensively documented in official records and in the nation's press, and the gunboat's loss remained well known up to the present time. In fact, when the Vicksburg District first began its search for the wreck of the *Eastport*, the *Ed. F. Dix* was not a consideration, its existence came to light only after research on the *Eastport* had begun.

This chapter presents a discussion of the *Ed. F. Dix*, to the extent that her history can be reconstructed. The *Dix* was just one of hundreds of steamboats operating on the Mississippi River and its tributaries at the time of the Civil War. It was somewhat unique, however, in that it was built during the war, a period that saw a considerable decrease in steamboat construction. Unlike military vessels, such as the *Eastport*, records on the activities of commercial steam packets, commonly, is not very extensive. Information on their ownership can be obtained from official documents, such as enrollments, and their commercial activities can, often, be partially reconstructed from information provided in the newspapers of river towns. In the previous chapter, these types of sources have been used to examine the activities of the *Eastport* during her years as a commercial packet steamer. The same approach is used here for the *Ed. F. Dix*. However, the career of the *Ed. F. Dix* was very short, the boat was only 13 months old when she struck the *Eastport* and it is simply the fact that only a small amount of documentation of any sort had accumulated about the steamer during this brief period. While not extensive, the information that is available on the short life of the *Ed. F. Dix* provides an interesting story of a western river steamboat.

Construction and Enrollment Documentation

The *Ed. F. Dix* was a wooden hulled, sidewheel steamboat built at Madison, Indiana, in the spring

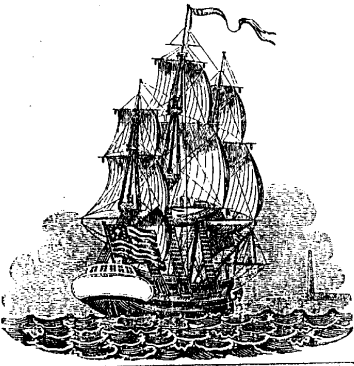
of 1864. On May 9, 1864, the steamer was first enrolled at Louisville, Kentucky, and it is assumed that her construction had been completed just a short time before. For some reason, two enrollments, both with the same May 9 date, both designated as “temporary” and both given Number 28 are extant for the *Dix* (Figures 3-1 and 3-2). These enrollment forms vary slightly and the one shown as Figure 3-2 is believed to be a copy that was made at a later date, possibly after the steamer’s loss. This idea is supported by the fact that W.D. Gallagher, the Collector of Customs for the Port of Louisville, signed only the enrollment shown as Figure 3-1. The documents contain, essentially, the same information, except that the one thought to be the original enrollment (Figure 3-1) notes that the *Ed. F. Dix* had “Side Wheels” and a “plain” head. Also, in this enrollment, the name Louisville has been marked out as the vessel’s homeport and replaced with St. Louis.

The name of this steamer appears in different forms in various publications, such as *Edward F. Dix* (Way 1994:142) and *E.F. Dix* (Norman 1942:443), but it is apparent from these enrollment documents that the official name of the boat was *Ed. F. Dix*. No record has been found that states exactly who the steamboat was named after, but it is thought that the steamer’s namesake was Captain Edmund F. Dix, prominent St. Louis businessman and steamboat owner and captain. Edmund F. Dix was active in steamboating in St. Louis in the years before the Civil War and was on the Board of Directors of the Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship Company, one of the largest steamboat companies in St. Louis. The Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship Company was organized just after the Civil War and operated as many as 24 steamers at the same time in the St. Louis-New Orleans trade. The company may have become just too large to manage and, with the loss of a number of steamboats through fire, explosion and other causes, the firm went into liquidation in 1869 (Hunter 1949:632). Prior to his involvement with the Atlantic & Mississippi company, Edmund Dix was part owner of the sidewheeler *Timour*, which was built in St. Louis in 1849, ran on the Missouri River for a while and later sank when her boilers exploded below Jefferson City, Missouri, in 1854. In addition, Edmund Dix was master of the *Star of the West*, a 435-ton sidewheeler built in 1855 at McKeesport, Pennsylvania, that ran in the Missouri River trade from St. Louis to St. Joseph. She later burned at St. Louis in 1858 (Way 1994:432, 456). The steamer *Ed. F. Dix*, also, started her career as a Missouri River steamboat, a trade that Edmund F. Dix had been active in.

While it is thought that the steamer *Dix* was named after Captain Edmund Dix, St. Louis city directories of 1864 and 1865 list two other residents named E.F. Dix who were associated with steamboating and who may have been the source of the steamer’s name. In 1864, an Edwin F. Dix is listed as a steamboatman with a residence at the corner of Lucas and Garrison avenues (St. Louis City Directory 1864). In 1865, Edward F. Dix is listed as residing on Garrison Avenue at the southeast corner of Lucas Avenue (St. Louis City Directory 1865). These appear to be the same address and it seems likely that these two names actually refer to a single individual. Nothing else is known about the person listed as Edwin F. Dix, but according to Way (1994:17), Edward Dix was captain of the steamer *Amanda* and ran her out of St. Louis from 1865 until 1867, when she was sold and went to the Missouri River trade. The hull of the *Amanda* was built in Metropolis, Illinois and completed in St. Louis in 1865. Way, also, notes that an “Edw. F. Dix” was captain of the steamer *Hiawatha* that ran the St. Louis-New Orleans trade in the “Railroad Line.” The *Hiawatha* was built in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, in 1856 and burned in 1863 at St. Louis (Way 1994:214). In an 1859 advertisement for the Railroad Line, an E.F. Dix is named as master of the *Hiawatha* (Huber 1959:70). It is assumed that this individual is the person listed as both Edwin Dix and Edward Dix in the St. Louis directories.

The May 9 enrollments for the *Ed. F. Dix* show that the steamer was 166 ft long, had a breadth of 35 ft and a depth of 5.6 ft. Her burden was 296 tons 77/95 and she had a “cabin on deck.” Way (1994:142) reports that the *Ed. F. Dix* was 266 ft long, obviously an incorrect reading of the original enrollments or a typographical error that has been perpetuated by Way as well as other secondary sources. At 166 ft long, the *Ed. F. Dix* can be considered an average-sized packet for the period. All of the available evidence indicates that the *Ed. F. Dix* was constructed specifically for use on the Missouri River. Missouri River boats did have some distinctive structural characteristics. For example, some Missouri River boats were built with what was known as a “spoonbill-bow,” a distinctive construction given the hulls of many boats operating on the upper waters of the river (Petsche 1974). However, the spoonbill-bow, apparently, did not come into existence until the very late 1860s or the 1870s. The remains of one Missouri River steamboat, the *Bertrand*, have been excavated and extensively reported (Petsche 1974). Like the *Dix*, the *Bertrand* was built in 1864 and, like the *Dix*, the *Bertrand* sank the following year. Unlike

ENROLMENT.



Enrolment in conformity to an Act of the CONGRESS of the United States of America, entitled "An act for enrolling and licensing SHIPS OR VESSELS, to be employed in the Coasting Trade and Fisheries, and for regulating the same."

D. A. Shepherd of St Louis Mo
having taken or subscribed the oath required by the said Act, and having sworn that

No. *28*

James G. Prother of St Louis Mo
W. H. Thorwega " do
J. M. Bowe " do

and are citizens of the UNITED STATES,
sole owners of the Ship or Vessel called the *Ed F. Dix*
Louisville whereof *D. A. Shepherd*
is at present master, and as he hath sworn is a citizen of
the UNITED STATES, and that the said Ship or Vessel was
built at *Macona Ga* in *1864*
as per *Admeasurement* dated and
issued at *Louisville Mo* *9th* *1864*

And *Deputy Surveyor*
having certified
that the said Ship or Vessel had *over* deck and *under* must
and that her length is *166*
her breadth *35*
her depth *5 - 6*
and that she measures *293 7/8*
tons; and
that she is *cc* *Straw* has *Cabin or Deck*
Side *White* and *plain* head.
And the said *D. A. Shepherd* having
agreed to the description and admeasurement above specified, and
sufficient security having been given, according to the said Act, the
said *Straw* has been duly enrolled at the Port of *R*

WHERE SURRENDERED.

DATE OF SURRENDER.
day of

CAUSE OF SURRENDER.

Given under my Hand and Seal, at the Port of
Louisville this *9th*
day of *May* in the year one
thousand eight hundred and *64*.

W. D. Gullett

Figure 3-1. May 9, 1864, enrollment document for the steamer Ed F. Dix (BMIN 1864a).

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ENROLLMENT

In conformity to Acts of Congress of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

ENTITLED

"An Act for enrolling and licensing ships or vessels to be employed in the coasting trade and fisheries, and for regulating the same," approved February 18, 1793; and of "An Act to regulate the admcas-
urement of tonnage of ships and vessels of the United States," approved May 6, 1864.

W. H. Sheppard of St. Louis, Mo.
having taken and subscribed the Oath required by said Acts, and having sworn that

James B. Prather of St. Louis owns 3/8
W. H. Sheppard " " " 1/8
J. H. Brown " " " 1/8

citizen of the United States, and the sole owner of the vessel called the *Ed. F. Dix*
of *St. Louis, Mo.*, whereof *W. H. Sheppard* is present master,
and, as he hath sworn, is a citizen of the United States, and that the said ship or vessel was *built at*
St. Louis, Mo. 1864.
as appears by per Admca. measurement dated & signed at *St. Louis*
May 9, 1864
and *W. H. Sheppard* having certified that the said vessel is a
; that she has *one* deck, *no* mast, *plain* head side wheel
stern; that her length is *166* feet, her breadth *35* feet, her depth *5.6* feet, her height
feet; that she measures— *298 77*

	TONS.	Gross.
Capacity under tonnage deck		
Capacity between decks above tonnage deck		
Capacity of inclosures on the upper deck, viz:		
Total Tonnage	<i>296</i>	<i>77</i>

and that she is a *Steamer* has cabin on deck

; and the said *W. H. Sheppard*

having agreed to the description and adjugement above specified, and sufficient security having been given,
according to the said Acts, the said *Steamer* has been duly Enrolled at the Port
of *St. Louis*

GIVEN under my hand and seal at the Port of *St. Louis*, in the District
of *Mo.*, this *9* day of *May*, in the year
one thousand *Eight Hundred & Sixty Four*

Naval Officer. Collector of Customs.

Figure 3-2. Possible copy of May 9, 1864, enrollment document for the steamer *Ed F. Dix* (BMIN 1864b).

the *Ed. F. Dix*, the *Bertrand* was a sternwheeler, so the two cannot be compared on all particulars. However, the *Bertrand* was not built with a spoonbill bow, and it is unlikely that the *Ed. F. Dix* was. Like the *Bertrand* and other Missouri River boats, the *Dix* had a shallow draft, but, in general, all steamers built for trade on tributary rivers or intended for “low water” operation were extremely shallow. Although intended for use on the Missouri, it is presently assumed that the *Ed. F. Dix* generally resembled other contemporary Ohio-built, “low water,” sidewheel packets of similar size.

Illustrations of sidewheelers of the 1860s similar in size to the *Ed. F. Dix* indicate that they generally resembled the steamer *Buckeye State* as presented in Figure 2-2. There were some differences, however. Typical of the large packets, the *Buckeye State* had a texas, the short cabin built on top of the hurricane deck (main cabin) (see Figure 2-2). Extant illustrations of smaller packets, like the *Ed. F. Dix*, indicate that they commonly lacked a texas; all passengers were housed in the main cabin. It is known that the *Dix* was built without a texas, because in July 1864, when the boat was only a few months

old, extensive alterations were made, including the addition of a texas (*Missouri Democrat* July 6, 1864). Lacking a texas, the passenger staterooms on the *Ed. F. Dix* would have lined the central “saloon” of the main cabin located atop the boiler deck, as shown in Figure 3-3. Although a pilothouse is not depicted in Figure 3-3, it would have rested directly on top of the hurricane deck. In July 1864, the *Missouri Democrat*, also, noted that the *Dix* would get a “full length cabin” and the boiler deck would be “run out 15 feet forward” (*Missouri Democrat* July 6, 1864). Photographs and drawings of sidewheelers from the 1860s often show that the main cabin was shorter and did not extend as far aft as did the one on the *Buckeye State* (see Figure 2-2). This was apparently the case for the *Ed. F. Dix* when built. Evidently, the boiler deck on the *Dix* did not extend as far forward as the one shown on the *Buckeye State* in Figure 2-2.

Like other similar western river steamboats, the *Ed. F. Dix* had guards that extended the main deck well beyond the sides of the hull to the outside edge of the paddlewheels, as shown in Figure 3-3. It is unknown how wide the entire main deck of the steamer

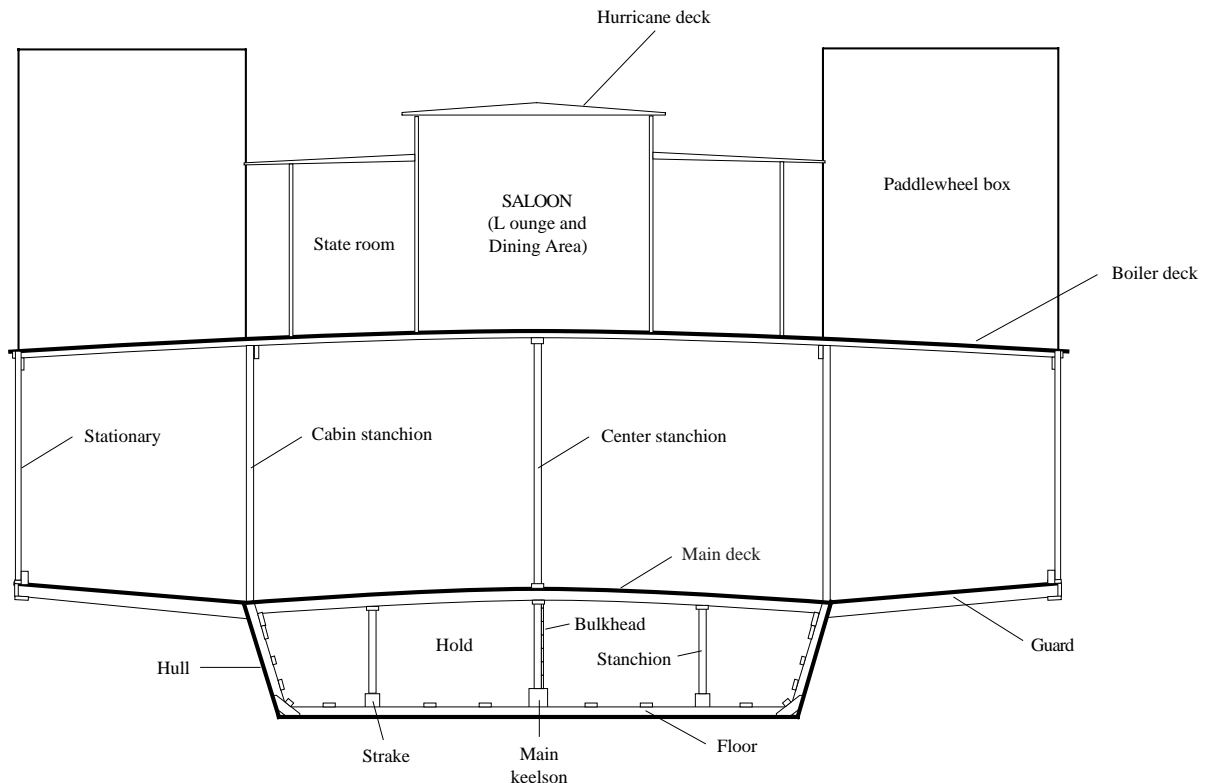


Figure 3-3. Cross section of the hull of a sidewheel steamer showing features expected to be found on the *Ed. F. Dix*.

was, because the 35-ft-breadth given in the enrollment documents refers only to the hull. The main deck would have exceeded the width of the hull by 50 to 75 percent (Hunter 1949:93), meaning it could have been well over 50 ft wide.

With its 35-ft breadth, the *Dix* had a relatively wide hull for a boat only 166 ft long. Hunter (1949:86) notes that the average length/breadth ratio of steamboats of 300 to 350 tons built in the 1850s and 1860s was 5.6 to 6.3. However, the length/breadth ration for the *Ed. F. Dix* was only 4.7. A relatively wide hull and low length/breadth ratio was common for boats built specifically for low water operation because it permitted maximum load bearing capacity on minimum draft (Hunter 1949:85). Long, narrow boats with high length/breadth rations were built for speed and for operation on the larger western rivers. The *Eastport*, for example, at 230 ft, 10 in long, was almost 65 ft longer than the *Ed. F. Dix*, but the *Eastport* was only 32 ft wide, 3 ft narrower than the *Dix*. With her relatively narrow hull and a length/breadth ration of 7.2 the *Eastport* was rather typical of the larger class of fast steamers operating on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers (Hunter 1949:86). On the other hand, the *Bertrand*, a Missouri River boat constructed specifically for shallow water conditions like the *Dix*, was 161 ft long and 32 ft, 9 in wide and had a similarly low length/breadth ration of 4.9 (Petsche 1974:7). The *Dix*'s wide hull and low length/breadth ratio reflect her builder's desire to construct a boat with a high cargo capacity that could operate in shallow water.

The *Ed. F. Dix*, reportedly, cost \$35,000 to build (*Missouri Democrat* May 16, 1864). This would be about \$117 per ton, slightly above the \$100 average cost per ton for a steamboat constructed during the 1850s (Haites et al. 1975:137) and well above the \$79 per ton it cost to build the *Eastport*. However, shortages of labor and material during the Civil War, plus inflation, ran up the cost of constructing steamboats. For example, the wages paid to men building steamboats at the Howard Ship Yard in Jeffersonville, Indiana, increased 35 percent between 1860 and 1864 (Fishbaugh 1970:52). Thus, the \$117 per ton it cost to build the *Ed. F. Dix* was probably about average, or even below average, for building rather modest steamboats like the *Dix* at the height of the war.

Madison, Indiana

Madison, Indiana, located on the Ohio River in Jefferson County about 40 miles upriver of Louis-

ville, Kentucky, was one of the many towns along the Ohio involved in steamboat construction. The *Ed. F. Dix* was built by the Madison Marine Railway Company, one of two boat yards operating in the town during the 1860s, the other being the Madison Dry Dock Company (Lang 1986:7). On September 6, 1864, the St. Louis newspaper, the *Missouri Democrat*, noted the construction of the *Dix* in a summary of steamers built for St. Louis:

BOAT	BUILDING	AT
MADISON...MADISON MARINE RAILWAY COMPANY—Steamer Ed. F. Dix, side wheel, 165 feet in length, 40 feet beam, and 5 1/2 feet hold; for Capt. John Bowen, of St. Louis [<i>Missouri Democrat</i> , September 6, 1864].		

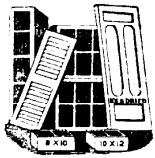
The Madison Marine Railway Company was established around 1850 and was one of many small boat yards on the Ohio River. The shipyard was expanded under new ownership in May 1852. The new owners were Alex F. Temple and D.C. Robinson and they, soon, established a reputation for constructing fast, reliable boats. By 1855, they employed 100 men and by 1857 had a weekly payroll of \$1000. By 1860, steamboat construction in Madison had grown enough that another shipyard, the Madison Dry Dock Company, was established (Lang 1986:7-9).

The business of building steamboats suffered everywhere when the Civil War began. Madison, with only two builders, possibly felt the downturn more than other cities. In 1861 and 1862, only five steamboats were built there. The war did create demand for transports and in 1863 the two Madison yards produced ten boats. This number decreased to eight in 1864 and in 1865, with the war ending, only four were built. The majority of the steamboats built at Madison during the war years were employed in some capacity by the Federal Government (Lang 1986:9).

With the drop in construction, the Madison Marine Railway Company went into debt and was sold in 1865 to L.H. Vance and H.H. Armstrong. An advertisement in the Madison City Directory (Figure 3-4) lists the Madison Marine Railway, situated on the river bank at the west end of town, as well as J.C. Crossley, a steamboat cabin builder located at the Railway (Madison City Directory 1867:158, 275). This might indicate that the cabin of the *Ed. F. Dix* was finished by Crossley, but this cannot be confirmed. Prior to 1872, the yard was sold to J.B. Stuart and Company. Hall (1884:191) notes that steamboat construction at Madison in the 1880s consisted

J. C. CROSSLEY,
At Madison Marine Railway, Madison, Ind.,
STEAMBOAT CABIN BUILDER,

MANUFACTURER OF



Doors, Shutters, Blinds,
SASH, DOOR AND WINDOW FRAMES,
Mouldings, Shelvings, Mantles,
BASE, PILASTERS AND LATH.

L. H. VANCE. H. H. ARMSTRONG.

VANCE & ARMSTRONG,
(Successors to Temple & Robinson.)

Madison Marine, Railway and Boat
BUILDERS,

STEAMBOATS repaired at the very short-
est notice.

DEALERS IN

WHEEL, ARMS & BUCKET PLANK,

Also, all kinds of Steamboat Lumber constantly on
hand.

MADISON, IND.

THOS. R. SMITH. FERGUS COCHRAN.

SMITH & COCHRAN,
CARPENTERS & BUILDERS,

N. S. Second St., bet. Poplar and Broadway,
MADISON, IND.

Orders solicited from City and Country. Jobbing done promptly.

Figure 3-4. Advertisement for Vance & Armstrong, Madison Marine Railway (source: Madison City Directory 1867:158).

of “four or five steamers and a few barges” a year, although he doesn’t indicate which yard or yards were doing the work. The Marine Railway yard remained in existence under several owners until 1932 when it burned, unfortunately destroying all of the company records (Lang 1986:9-11).

The exact number of steamboats built at Madison is unknown. While many steamers were built there, the town was not as productive as other Ohio River towns, such as New Albany, Jeffersonville, Louisville, and Cincinnati. For example, enrollment documents for the port of New Orleans show that by 1870, eighteen Madison-built boats had been

enrolled in the city, all constructed between 1856 and 1870 (WPA 1942:7:xiii). By contrast, 62 boats built in Cincinnati, 45 built in New Albany, Indiana, and 44 built in Jeffersonville, Indiana, had been enrolled in New Orleans by 1870. These would represent only a portion of the steamers constructed at these towns, but the numbers do show that the steamboat output of Madison was considerably lower than many other Ohio River towns.

The Owners of the Ed. F. Dix

Enrollment documents show that the original owners of the *Ed. F. Dix* were James G. Prather, W.H. Thorwega, and J.H. Bowen, all residents of St. Louis. D.H. Sheppard is listed as master, plus, he is the person who appeared before custom officials in Louisville to have the vessel enrolled. Prather and Thorwega each owned a 3/8 portion and Bowen owned a 2/8 portion of the steamer. The *Missouri Democrat* of September 6, 1864, reported that the boat was built for “Captain John Bowen,” but it is not known if Bowen was the person who actually dealt with or ordered the boat from the Madison Marine Railway Company. The three original owners of the *Ed. F. Dix* were all prominent St. Louis businessmen who were heavily involved in steamboating on the western rivers.

John Griffith Prather

John Griffith Prather, owner of a 3/8 share of the *Ed. F. Dix*, was born on June 16, 1834, in Clermont County, Ohio. He was the son of Wesley Fletcher and Margaret (Taylor) Prather. His father was of Welsh ancestry and his mother was Scotch. His mother died when he was an infant (Stevens 1909:1018). His family is said to have been connected with steamboating from its earliest days on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. John G. Prather started on the river at a young age and worked in almost every position on steamboats, from the “deck to the roof.” He went to St. Louis in 1850 following his interests on the river until 1852, when he went to California (Gould 1889:703). There, he fished for salmon on the Sacramento River (Stevens 1909:1020) but, in 1855, he returned to St. Louis and worked with his uncle Daniel G. Taylor in the wholesale liquor business (Gould 1889:703). By 1864, John Prather had succeeded his uncle in the liquor business (Figure 3-5) (St. Louis City Directory 1864:328). Advertisements show that John Prather’s company specialized in supplying “Wines, Liquors, Cigars, &c.” to steamboats, presumably, a lucrative business considering the num-

JOHN G. PRATHER, L. L. BARRELL, M. THOMPSON.
JOHN G. PRATHER & CO.,
(Successors to DANIEL G. TAYLOR & Co.,)
Importers of and Dealers in
Wines, Liquors, Cigars, &c.,
65 NORTH LEVEE, ST. LOUIS.
Steamboat and Hotel Bars supplied at short notice. Orders from the Country promptly attended to.

Figure 3-5. Advertisement in 1864 St. Louis City Directory for John G. Prather & Co.

ber of steamboats calling at St. Louis and the popularity of alcohol consumption onboard steamers.

John Prather, also, participated in the ownership and operation of steamboats, owning shares in several during the 1850s to the 1870s (Figure 3-6a). In addition, he served as the captain on several boats. The sidewheeler *Westerner* seems to have been one of the first steamboats that Prather was associated with. The *Westerner* was built at St. Louis in 1853 and was owned by the St. Louis & Keokuk Packet Company. John Prather served as her captain before her loss to ice in 1855 (Way 1994:484). The St. Louis & Keokuk company was known for the magnificence of service aboard some of their boats. An example is an account of an 1856 bill of fare for one of the company's steamers, the *New Lucy*, noting that food aboard the boat:

... would tempt the most exacting epicure. It consisted of buffalo tongue, antelope steak, wild turkey, prairie chicken, buffalo hump, roast quail, woodcock, mutton, all vegetables in season, red snapper, sheepshead and bass. The pastries and confectioneries were excellent. The repast ended with claret, white wine and champagne. The cooking was of the best and the service beyond criticism [American Association Masters, Mates and Pilots 1919:29].

Prather served as captain and part owner of at least one other steamer owned by the company. This was the sidewheel steamboat *Des Moines*, built at Madison, Indiana, in 1857. In 1864, the *Des Moines* was one of the many steamboats chartered by the Army Quartermaster Department for transport service during the Red River Campaign in Louisiana (Gibson and Gibson 1995a; Way 1994:125).

John Prather was captain of the sternwheel packet *Fairy Queen* in 1859 in the Cincinnati to Mayersville trade. She was built at Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania, in 1854. Another boat in the Cincinnati-Mayersville trade was the *Magnolia*, which, according to Way (1994:303) was built for and commanded by a Capt. James H. Prather, presumably a relative of John Prather. Constructed in 1859 at Cincinnati, the *Magnolia's* boilers exploded at California, Ohio, in March 1868, killing many on board, including James Prather.

The *Bart Able* was another steamboat that was partly owned by John G. Prather. She was built in 1864 and in 1867 was sold to a group of men consisting of Capt. W.C. Harrison, W.H. Thorwegen, J.N. Terrel and Prather. The *Bart Able* was a 206-ft-long, sidewheel packet built at Louisville, Kentucky, and named for Capt. Bart Able of St. Louis, a well-known and accomplished riverman. Originally built for the Merchants & Peoples' Line in the St. Louis-New Orleans trade, when the *Bart Able* was sold to Prather and the others she was used in the New Orleans-Shreveport trade (Way 1994:38). Like the *Des Moines* and the *Ed. F. Dix*, the *Bart Able* served as an Army Quartermaster transport during the Civil War (Gibson and Gibson 1995a:29).

During the Civil War, John G. Prather was considered a staunch "Union man." He helped organize a regiment, and served as Lieutenant-Colonel of the 5th Regimental Missouri Militia during the war (Gould 1889:703-704). Prather continued in the steamboat business after the war and was one of the owners of the *Fannie Tatum*, a 177-ft sidewheeler built at Madison, Indiana, and completed in St. Louis in 1873 (Way 1994:161). This steamer was constructed specifically for the St. Louis and Arkansas River trade.

It is apparent that John G. Prather was involved in wide-ranging steamboat activity for many years, holding ownership in boats working on the Mississippi, Ohio, Red and Arkansas rivers. With his ownership of the *Ed. F. Dix*, he, also, was involved in the Missouri River trade. In addition to his business involvement with the St. Louis & Keokuk Packet Company, Prather, also, was associated with one of the largest steamboat lines on the Mississippi River, the Anchor Line. He was affiliated with the Anchor

Line for over twenty years, serving for a time as its director.

William H. Thorwega

William H. Thorwega, another of the original owners of the *Ed. F. Dix*, was born on July 24, 1837, in Dersan, Germany. He came to the United States in 1843 and began his career on the river at an early age, working as a cabin boy for five years and later going into the bar business. Thorwega owned the bars on several boats of the St. Louis & Keokuk Packet Company and the Memphis and St. Louis Packet Company. His involvement in the bar business and the St. Louis & Keokuk Packet Company meant that he had business dealings with John G. Prather. In addition to his bar business, Thorwega, also, became part or full owner of several steamboats and he remained associated with riverboats until into the twentieth century. During his career he became one of the most important steamboatmen in the west and held ownership in some of the grandest and most famous of all western steamboats. These included the *Grand Republic*, *Charles P. Chouteau* and the *City of Providence*.

The steamer *La Crosse* may have been the first steamboat in which Thorwega held ownership. In 1859, the 22-year-old Thorwega was listed as part owner, as well as master, of the *La Crosse* (Way 1994). After the Civil War, Thorwega and others purchased the *De Soto* from the United States Government. The *De Soto* was built in Madison, Indiana, and was completed at New Albany, Indiana, in 1860. She was a 180-ft sidewheeler built for Capt. H.H. Beard of New Orleans. The *De Soto* served as a Confederate gunboat at Island Number 10 on the Mississippi River, where Union forces captured her in April 1862. She was refitted as a tinclad and renamed the *General Lyon* in October 1862. In 1864, the *General Lyon* was with Admiral Porter's fleet on Red River. Shortly after Thorwega and his partner, Captain H.L. Lee, purchased the *De Soto*, they changed the steamer's name to *Alabama* (Way 1994:7, 8, 126, 181). Another boat owned by William Thorwega and H.L. Lee was the *Lizzie Tate*, purchased in 1866. Originally called the *Victory*, the *Lizzie Tate* was built at

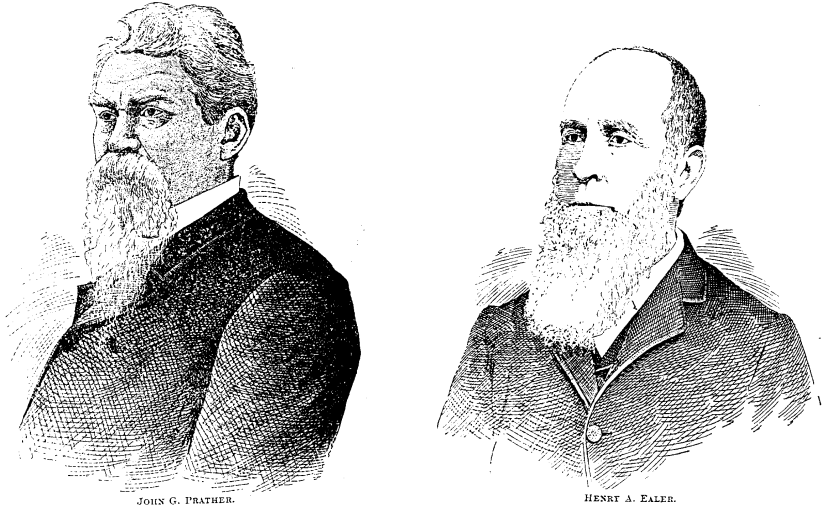


Figure 3-6. Two of the owners of the *Ed. F. Dix*. a, John G. Prather; b, Henry A. Ealer (source: Gould 1889:661; 704).

Cincinnati in 1863 and before she was documented was sold to the U.S. Government for war service (Way 1994:291).

One of the most famous steamboats owned by William Thorwega was the *Great Republic*, built at Shousetown, Pennsylvania, and completed at Pittsburgh in 1867. In less than two years the original owners had gone bankrupt and after a reorganization Capt. Thorwega and Thomas Morrison bought the boat in 1871 for \$48,000. They lengthened her original 335-ft-long hull at the Carondelet Ways in 1872, but Morrison went bankrupt in 1875. Thorwega bought out Morrison and in 1876 rebuilt the steamer, added another boiler, and changed her name to *Grand Republic*. This was one of the largest steamboats on the Mississippi River at the time. In May 1876, the *Grand Republic* came into New Orleans with 8,210 bales of cotton, the most carried into the city by a steamer up to that time. While laid up at St. Louis in September 9, 1877, the *Grand Republic* burned, along with another steamer, the *Carondelet* (Way 1994:196-198, 486).

Capt. Thorwega bought the burned steamer *Carondelet* and had her rebuilt for the St. Louis to New Orleans trade. The *Carondelet* was an iron-hulled packet built in Carondelet, Missouri, in 1875. In the summer of 1878, the steamer was put on the ways at Carondelet where she was given four new boilers and her hull was lengthened 50 feet to 296.7 ft. This made her the longest sternwheel packet on the river. Thorwega also changed her name to the

Charles P. Chouteau. Designed for the cotton trade, the *Chouteau* primarily ran the Memphis to New Orleans route. In 1878 she carried 8,841 bales of cotton to New Orleans, the second largest load on record behind the *Henry Frank*. In 1881, the *Chouteau* delivered 76,950 bales of cotton to New Orleans, the record for one boat in a single season. Capt. Thorwengen commanded the *Chouteau* and she had the distinction of being one of the first steamboats with electric lights seen at St. Louis (Way 1994:72,80). Another boat owned by Thorwengen was the sidewheeler *City of St. Louis*. Built by the Howard Ship Yards at Jeffersonville, Indiana, in 1883 for the Anchor Line, Thorwengen bought her in 1898 at a United States Marshal's sale in St. Louis for a bid of \$19,050. He owned the *City of St. Louis* for about a year before selling her (Way 1994:97).

Capt. William H. Thorwengen had great foresight and was one of the first in the steamboat business to see excursions as a future river industry, an activity that remained profitable well after much of the steamboat trade had disappeared. In one of his earliest excursion ventures, he relaid the main deck of his large sternwheeler *Charles P. Chouteau* to create a dance hall and, it was rumored, that a roller-skating floor would be put on the boat as well (Swift 1989:8). In 1910, he chartered the sidewheeler *Grey Eagle* as an excursion boat at St. Louis. Built at Jeffersonville, Indiana, by the Howard Ship Yards in 1892, the *Grey Eagle* had an illustrious career. Originally constructed for the Eagle Packet Company of St. Louis and designed for the St. Louis to Peoria trade, she was a fairly large boat at 250 ft long. In 1894, the *Grey Eagle* was chartered to the Anchor Line for the St. Louis to Vicksburg trade. In 1907, the *Grey Eagle* participated in a parade of boats welcoming President Theodore Roosevelt at St. Louis. In 1909, leaving from St. Louis, she again participated in a presidential parade, this time accompanying President William H. Taft down the Mississippi River (Way 1994:201).

John H. Bowen

Another one of the original owners of the *Ed. F. Dix* was John H. Bowen. Little is known about Bowen, but City Directories of St. Louis for the years of 1864 and 1865 list him as a resident. In 1864, he was working as a

commission merchant and a cotton factor in partnership with Joseph S. Pease (Figure 3-7). Their business was located at 1 South Commercial Street on the corner of Market Street (St. Louis City Directory 1864:345). In 1865, John H. Bowen resided in the Compton Hill area at Lafayette Avenue and he was in business with Robert N. Martin (as Bowen & Martin) as a commercial merchant at 12 Pine Street (St. Louis City Directory 1865).

In 1865, the ownership of the *Ed. F. Dix* changed and a new enrollment was issued, dated May 10, 1865 (Figure 3-8). This second enrollment was issued, like the first, at the Port of Louisville. Henry A. Ealer of St. Louis and Geo. Pegram are listed as owners, with Ealer having a 1/4 share and Pegram a 3/4 share. Henry Ealer, also, is listed as master. In the enrollment the steamer is referred to as the "*E. F. Dix*" and the dimensions given are quite different from those provided in the original enrollments issued the previous year. The vessel is described as having "one deck and no mast, and that her length is 170 8/10 feet, her breadth is 39 0/10 feet, her depth 5 8/10 feet, her height 22 0/10 feet, and that she measures six hundred seventy two tons and eighteen hundredths . . . that she is [a] steamer [and] has cabin on deck side wheels and plain head" (BMIN 1865). The reason for these differences is that the *Ed. F. Dix* had been seriously damaged by a fire in the summer of 1864 and had been rebuilt, as is discussed in detail below. The new owners of the *Ed. F. Dix*, like the previous ones, were men heavily involved in the steamboat business in St. Louis.

Henry A. Ealer

Henry A. Ealer, who acquired an ownership in the *Ed. F. Dix* in 1865, was born in 1820 in Allen-

JNO. H. BOWEN,

JOS. S. PEASE.

JNO. H. BOWEN & CO.,
COMMISSION MERCHANTS
AND COTTON FACTORS,
No. 1 City Buildings, Cor. Commercial & Market Sts.

Figure 3-7. Advertisement in 1864 St. Louis City Directory for Jno. H. Bowen & Co.

In conformity to an act of the CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, entitled "An Act for Enrolling and Licensing SHIPS OR VESSELS to be employed in the Coasting Trade and Fisheries, and for regulating the same, approved February 18th, 1793, and of an "Act to regulate the Admeasurement of TONNAGE OF SHIPS AND VESSELS of the United States," approved May 6th, 1864.

Henry C. Ealer of St Louis Mo
having taken or subscribed to the oath required by the said Act, and having
sworn that he owns $\frac{1}{2}$ and Geo. P. Symmons $\frac{3}{4}$
and are

citizens of the United States, sole owners of the Ship or Vessel called the
 "C. F. Day" of
 Louisville whereof Henry W. Cates is at present master, and as he hath sworn, is a citizen of the United States, and
 that the said Ship or Vessel was built at Nashville in
 the State of Tennessee in the year 1864, as appears by
 Certificate of Enrollment No. dated and issued at the
 Port of Louisville, May 9th 1864

and

No. 10. *Sella*, she, having certified that the said
Ship or Vessel has _____ deck and no mast, and that
her length is _____ 17⁰/₁₀ feet,
her breadth is _____ 39⁰/₁₀ feet,
her depth _____ 3⁰/₁₀ feet,
her height _____ 22⁰/₁₀ feet,
and that she measures Six hundred Seventy Two tons,
and Eighteen hundredths, viz:

	TONS.	1 100
Capacity under Tonnage Deck,	381	12
Capacity between Decks and above Tonnage Deck,	371	16
Capacity of Enclosures on upper Deck, viz:		

TOTAL TONNAGE

That she is Stearns has Cabin or Deck
Side Wheels and plain head.
And the said Henry C. Walker having agreed to
the description and admeasurement above specified, and sufficient security
having been given, according to the said Acts, the said Stearns
"B. N. G. 4" has been duly enrolled at the Port of Louisville.

Given under my Hand and Seal of Office at the Port of Louisville, this ... 10 ...
day of ... May ... in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty ...

A. A. Gallacher Surveyor of Customs.

Wm. L. Palmer

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town, Pennsylvania (see Figure 3-6b). His life on the water began at an early age. When he was twelve, he sailed on the brig *Sultan* from Baltimore to Rio de Janeiro. In 1835, he went to St. Louis on the steamer *John Nelson* with Capt. John P. Moore. Capt. John Carlisle, subsequently, took command of the boat and trained Ealer to be a pilot on the trip to New Orleans. By 1839, Ealer was serving as a pilot in the New Orleans trade and by 1841 he was promoted to captain of the steamer *Telegraph* (Gould 1889:660-661). He continued to serve as pilot for a number of steamers, principally, in the trade between St. Louis and New Orleans, including the *Express Mail*, the *Alton*, the *Highlander*, and the *Princeton*. Ealer, reportedly, served as a pilot on over one hundred different steamboats, including one of Admiral Farragut's gunboats that passed Vicksburg in 1862 (Gould 1889:662). In 1864, Henry C. Ealer is recorded as a pilot working at 176 North 5th Street in St. Louis (St. Louis City Directory 1864).

In the 1850s, in addition to piloting, Henry Ealer began to become involved in steamboat ownership. The sidewheel packet *H.D. Bacon* was built at Cincinnati in 1851 for Ealer and other owners and ran the St. Louis-New Orleans trade. In 1856, he and others had the *Joseph H. Oglesby* built for the Louisville-New Orleans trade and in the same year the *Planet* was built at Cincinnati for a group that included Henry Ealer. The *Planet* had no state-rooms in her cabin and was intended, primarily, for use as a freight boat. During the Civil War the *Planet* was in government service, working on the Tennessee River (Way 1994:16, 158, 203, 215, 257, 374, 379).

George Pegram

George Pegram, who acquired a 3/4 ownership in the *Ed. F. Dix* in 1865, was another prominent St. Louis steamboatman and entrepreneur. His father, a physician, moved from Virginia to Carrollton, Illinois, when George was a young boy. After his father's death, the family moved to Newport, on the Illinois River. There, George Pegram and his brother, B. Rush Pegram, began careers on the river and both, eventually, moved to St. Louis. By the 1860s, George and Rush Pegram were involved in the ownership of a number of steamboats and both were associates in the Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship Company, as was Edmund F. Dix.

George Pegram was among the group of rivermen comprising the Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship

Company who had the packet *Julia* built in 1863 by the Howard Ship Yards at Jeffersonville, Indiana. The *Julia* was constructed for service in the St. Louis-New Orleans trade, as were so many of George Pegram's boats (Way 1994:260). In February 1865, George Pegram was one of the bidders at the auction for the steamer *Leviathan*. The newspaper account of the sale rumored that she was bought for Captain E.F. Dix and also for the Atlantic and Mississippi Steamship Company (*Missouri Democrat* February 2, 1865). Ambrose Reader had the *Leviathan* built at New Albany, Indiana, in 1864 to run in the St. Louis-New Orleans trade. The *Leviathan* was a large boat, measuring 307 ft long and 93 ft wide with paddlewheels that were 38 ft in diameter and 17 ft wide. She was fitted with seven boilers and her engines came from the huge, 350-ft-long steamer *Eclipse* (Way 1994:138-189, 284).

The *Ruth* was another of the boats built by Howard for George Pegram. Constructed in 1863, the 275-ft vessel cost \$65,000 to build. B. Rush Pegram, George's brother, served for a time as the master of the *Ruth*. This *Ruth*, the first of its name, supposedly earned \$110,000 for George Pegram during her first year of operation. These profits came from carrying cotton and, probably, contraband (Fishbaugh 1970:56). The *Ruth* was burned in August of 1863 by southern sympathizers at Norfolk, six miles below Cairo (Gould 1889:698-699).

Many of the boats owned in whole or in part by George Pegram in the 1860s were constructed by the Howard Ship Yards. Fishbaugh (1970:56) notes that Pegram was Howard's best customer during the Civil War years, with the boats he ordered accounting for about 50 percent of the yards total tonnage from 1861 to 1865.

In 1865, a second steamboat named *Ruth* was built by the Howard Ship Yards for the Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship Company under the direction of George Pegram. This was truly a magnificent boat and was praised as "The Wonder of the West." She was a large boat at 309 ft long, 48.5 ft wide and 9.5 ft deep. Her engines came from the *H.R.W. Hill* and were 30 inches in diameter with a 10-ft stroke. The *Ruth* was considered a "stepper, making the time New Orleans-St. Louis in 4 days 9 hours 54 minutes" (Way 1994:405-406). The following description of the boat is revealing of the extent that George Pegram and the other owners went to create more than just a means of transportation:

It has . . . devolved upon Capt. George Pegram, who has had several boats built for the Atlantic and Mississippi Steamship Company, to fully illustrate the fact that what has been done can be done again. From originating the plans and furnishing the means, to executing the work, he has brought forth in the new Ruth the greatest boat in every respect that has ever graced our shores. No other steamer, not even the far-famed Eclipse, could vie with her in size, capacity, burthen, or cost. Everything about her is on the grandest and most magnificent scale, while nothing has been omitted that science or money could furnish, in making her the most complete steamer for passengers and business combined that has ever yet been seen on our Southwestern highway.

Capt. Pegram is a gentleman of the most enlightened and liberal views, who does not hesitate a moment at the cost of the venture—his sole aim being to supply the traveling and shipping public with a steamer to ply the waters of the Mississippi that shall not be surpassed, if equaled, in any good or essential quality by any vessel or steamship on the Atlantic seaboard, or in Europe. In constructing and furnishing the Ruth with a complete outfit suitable to her vast proportions, upwards of a quarter of a million of dollars have been expended She is . . . most admirably adapted to the navigation of the Mississippi and Ohio, combining great strength with light draught, the hull being the largest and most costly yet built in the West, giving her freight capacity for 2500 tons, and, when light, trimming on four feet water She has a sharp and easy model, fore and aft, which, together with her light draught and immense motive power, will make her speed equal to the fleetest, while in the vastness of her capacity for freight and passengers, she far exceeds any boat afloat, or any likely to be built for many years to come.

The Ruth . . . has one peculiarity, however, being a regular four-decker—the first, or main deck being for the reception of live stock and bulky freight, such as cotton, hay or tobacco, and the second deck exclusively for deck passengers, having accommodations and room for at least 1000 very comfortably. Over the second deck is the main cabin, the most complete and magnificent in outline ever seen since the days of the great Eclipse. The style is new and original, representing a lofty drawing room and dining room combined, supported on either side with columns, with a wide recess or promenade on each side,

opening upon which are the state-rooms, or rather two long rows of cosey [*sic*], white cottages with marble steps and rosewood doors. Once within you find the state-rooms fitted up with every convenience and luxury, including all the requisites for a chamber or sleeping room, and the beds the largest and softest that ever invited the weary and tired traveler to rest. The cabin of the Ruth is higher, lighter, and fully eight feet wider than that of any boat afloat, and of course all her rooms are equally capacious. The main cabin is 268 feet in length, 23 feet wide, and 13 1/2 feet in high [*sic*], the whole painted a pure zinc white, slightly etched with gold, the style of the cabin being semi-Gothic. The furniture is the finest satin and rosewood, and the ladies' cabin adorned in the richest style and purest taste, the after bulkhead being filled with an immense mirror, over twelve feet in high [*sic*], on either side of which are two French plate, oval, convex mirrors, which are rare curiosities, and very beautiful, imparting to the view a scene of splendor and magnificence rarely beheld.

Below the ladies' cabin is the nursery, the servants' rooms, wash rooms, bath rooms, and laundry room, fitted up in the most comfortable and complete manner, in unison with all the other appointments of the boat. The guards are unusually wide, and the after guards closed in with lattice work to prevent either accidents to children, or intrusion from the other portions of the boat. There are two clerk's offices, arranged along the sides of the cabin next to the state rooms, and not in the extreme front of the cabin to obstruct the hall, and prevent a free circulation of air in summer. The bar and barber shop are on the starboard guard, and the pantries, cook house, store rooms, and gentlemen's baths are on the larboard guard. In her cabin and texas, exclusive of the officers' rooms, upwards of two hundred passengers can be accommodated in state rooms with beds, while cots could be put up along the cabin and guards, all under shelter, for three hundred more; which, together with her crew of at least one hundred men, and the deck passengers accommodations, gives her full capacity for 1600 persons—a world in itself In the painting of the Ruth the greatest skill and good taste have been exhibited, in addition to which it was an almost herculean effort. The cabin, on the inside had to have eight or nine coats, and the happy blending of colors in the landscape sketches, as well as the panels of the doors marks the true artist, and Mr. Williams deserves especial credit

for the masterly execution of his allotted task. The *Ruth*, however, is the best card all parties concerned can have of their ability and skill, as she now ranks as the finest boat afloat and the wonder of the West in marine architecture [Huber 1959:40].

The details of the *Ruth*'s construction give insight into the efforts of the builder as well:

In the construction of the *Ruth* three full-sized rafts of oak timber were used by the ship carpenters for the hull, and the cabin-builders worked up over 200,000 feet of pine lumber in the upper works. The length of the boat is 312 feet, and her extreme width, over the guards and hull, is 86 feet, giving her a superficial area or surface, of 26,832 feet on the first deck. The iron used in the boilers only, including two mud drums and the stand drum, was 83,501 pounds, or nearly 42 tons. Then comes the weight of her two main engines, the doctor engine, freight hoister, nigger engine, fire engine, cranks, and flanges, the ponderous water wheel shafts, steam pipes, escape pipes and tall chimneys, the tops of which are exactly 106 1/2 feet from the surface of the water. These furnish the weight of one hundred tons more of iron. She has six boilers, each 46 inches in diameter, and 20 feet in length, with four return flues in each, the flues being thirteen and fourteen inches in diameter, the whole made of extra thick malleable wrought iron.

The main engines are each 31 inches in diameter, with 10 feet length of stroke, working water wheels 38 feet in diameter, with 15 1/2 feet length of buckets. The steam freight hoister works an endless chain and platform, which rolls the freight in and out of the hold of the boat without delay or trouble. Thousands of barrels of pork can be thus stowed away in the hold as easily as rolling it along a level floor. The chimneys above the deck stand 26 feet apart, and each chimney is 70 inches in diameter, extending 75 feet above the upper deck, with the name—*Ruth*—in gold letters between the chimneys. These letters are each about six feet in length and the same in breadth [Huber 1959:40].

In 1865, the Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship Company was operating no less than 21 steamboats on the Mississippi and its tributaries (Figure 3-9). George Pegram's brother, B.R. Pegram, at the time acted as agent for the company in New Orleans. In the same year, the Directors of the company in St.

Atlantic & Mississippi STEAMSHIP CO.

OF SAINT LOUIS.

Office, Cor. Pine, Commercial and Levee.

JOHN J. ROE,
President.

D. S. CARTER,
Secretary.

JOHN N. BOFINGER,
Superintendent.

TOM. MILLER, Jr.,
General Freight Agent.

AGENTS.

J. EAGER, 41 Broad St., New York

BAKER, BROS. & FORBES, 101 State St., Boston

B. R. PEGRAM, 39 Poydras St., New Orleans

JOHN T. WASHINGTON, Cairo, Illinois

WM. M. JOHNSON, Vicksburg

Company's Steamers.

ATLANTIC,
W. R. ARTHUR,
IDA HANDY,
CITY OF MEMPHIS,
JULIA,
MISSISSIPPI,
MOLLIE ABLE,
LUMINARY,
EDWARD WALSH,
LUNA,

MISSOURI,
OLIVE BRANCH,
MARY E. FORSYTH,
HANNIBAL,
NIAGARA,
CONTINENTAL,
PAULINE CARROLL,
BEN. STICKNEY,
J. C. SWON,
W. R. CARTER,
LEVIATHAN.

Figure 3-9. Advertisement for the Atlantic & Mississippi Steamship Co. of St. Louis (source: St. Louis City Directory 1865).

Louis were: John J. Roe, Daniel Able, George Pegram, Barton Able, John P. Fitzgerald, Theodore Laveille, Adolphus Meir, Edgar Ames, W.R. Carter, Edmund F. Dix and John N. Bofinger, and, in Cincinnati, Theodore Cook and David Gibson (St. Louis City Directory 1865:155).

John J. Roe, president of the Atlantic & Mississippi Company in 1865 (Figure 3-10), was one of the owners of the steamboat *Bertrand* lost on the Missouri River in 1865 and, one hundred years later, was found and excavated in 1968-1969. Roe was a prominent St. Louis businessman and steamboat captain (Petsche 1974:8). Also, an interesting character was the company's superintendent, John N. Bofinger. Bofinger began his career on the river as a clerk in

FOR MISSOURI RIVER.

For Boonville, Brunswick, Lexington, Kansas and Leavenworth.
 Steamer M. S. MEPHAM.....A. H. Shaw, master
 Will leave for the above and intermediate
 ports, **TUESDAY, May 17, at 4 p. m.**
 For freight or passage apply on board.
 my16 A. L. RYLAND, Advertising Agent.

For Booneville, Glasgow, Lexington, Kansas and Leavenworth.
 Steamer ED. F. DIX.....Shepherd, master,
 Will leave for the above and intermediate
 ports **TUESDAY, May 17, at 4 p. m.**
 For freight or passage apply on board.
 my16 A. L. RYLAND, Advertising Agent.

For St. Joseph, Council Bluffs and Omaha.
 Steamer IZETTA.....Herndon, master
 Will leave for the above and intermediate
 ports, **THIS DAY, May 16, at 3 p. m.**
 For freight or passage apply on board.
 my16 A. L. RYLAND, Advertising Agent.

FOR THE GOLD MINES OF IDAHO—Virginia City, Kallock City and the Sinking Water Valley Gold Regions.—St. Louis and Fort Benton Freight and Passenger Packet—For Fort Benton and the Great Falls of the Missouri.
 The exceedingly light draught, staunch
 hull, and fast running passenger steamer
 GEN. U. S. GRANT, Packard, master,
 leave for the above and intermediate points, on **WEDNESDAY, May 26, at 12 o'clock m.**
 JOS. MCENTIRE, Agent.
 The lightness of draft and speed of the Gen. Grant,
 give every assurance of a quick and pleasant trip to the
 mines. my14 u

Figure 3-10. Advertisement for the *Ed. F. Dix* and other Missouri River steamers (source: *Missouri Democrat* May 16, 1864).

1846 on the mail line steamers plying the Ohio River between Louisville and Cincinnati. In 1848, he was clerk on the steamer *Atlantic* and within six years became captain on the boat. In 1854, along with John J. Roe and Rhodes, and Pegram & Co., he purchased the steamer *L.M. Kennett*. This same group, also, built the steamer *William M. Morrison* in 1857 (Scharf 1883:1120). Way mentions that Mark Twain was a pilot on this boat for a short period of time (Way 1994:489). Capt. Bofinger commanded many steamers and gained a reputation of being “an unusually successful” captain. During the years before the Civil War, he made 192 trips between St. Louis and New Orleans without an accident that caused loss of life. That success carried over into the Civil War, where Bofinger’s ability as a commander and organizer led him to be the largest steamboat owner in the world; between 1861 and 1867 he owned thirty steamers. He acquired a large number of the Federal Government contracts for the transportation of troops and supplies on the Mississippi River and its tributaries during the war. In 1862, Bofinger was chosen by General Lewis B. Parsons, in the Army Quartermaster Department, to proceed to Memphis and

Helena to oversee the movement of troops and animals for the Union’s move against Vicksburg (Scharf 1978:1120).

The Ed. F. Dix and the Missouri River Trade, 1864

The first mention of the steamer *Ed. F. Dix* in the “River News” column of the St. Louis newspaper, the *Missouri Democrat*, appeared on May 12, just three days after the steamer’s enrollment in Louisville and before she even arrived in St. Louis. The paper noted:

The new steamer Ed. F. Dix has left Madison, Indiana, for this port, and is about due. She is commanded by our handsome fellow citizen, Captain J. G. Prather, of the celebrated liquor establishment on the wharf, and the exemplary Bill Thorwegen is her gentlemanly and accomplished clerk. The latter was at one time commander of the Lacrosse upon some of her daring explorations. The Ed. F. Dix goes into the Missouri, with prospects of a merry time. Mr. Thorwegen knows all about the “bars” [*Missouri Democrat*, May 12, 1864].

The reference about the “bars” is certainly a play on words and doesn’t refer to the sandbars on the Missouri River, but the liquor bars on steamboats; a business in which William Thorwegen was involved. On May 13 the boat is again mentioned in the newspaper: “The Ed. F. Dix, Davenport, Victory, Mephram, Platte Valley and Lasalle are among the first boats do here . . . The Victory leaves for Nashville tomorrow, and the Ed. F. Dix for the Missouri River” (*Missouri Democrat* May 13, 1864). It is not known what day the *Dix* arrived in St. Louis from the Ohio River, but it was by May 16, when her arrival and cargo were published in the paper, along with a brief description:

MADISON, Ind. — Per Ed. F. Dix - J.G. Prather & co 103 brls whisky 8 empty brls; J.N. Heber 1 buggy; H. & A.P. Catermole 10 barrels cement; T.H. Wilke 10; C. Knell 100 brls; Dunham & Gregg 7 pkg [packages]; Watson & McFarland 1; Hooker 6; A. Phillips 1; J. & S. Albert 12 1/2 bds [bundles] paper; M.L. 5; S. Evans 38 brls; B.S. Grant & co 12 hhd tobacco; J.B. Eads 7; B. Smith & co 99 brls; Anderson & Watson 14 rls [rolls] leather; W.L. Ewing & co 180 brls flour, 1 hhd tobacco, 1 anchor; owner on board 5 brls ware, 1 bdl 20 hides; T.L. Wilkinson

& co 2 bdl's 8 hides, 2 sks [sacks] feathers; G.W. Fisher 2 horses.

The *Ed. F. Dix* has had her name erased from the pilot house. It will be replaced by ornamental letters. This steamer will leave to-morrow for Leavenworth. She was built at Madison, expressly for the Missouri river trade. She is 166 feet long and 40 feet beam, and will carry 550 tons. She is a very staunch side-wheel boat, with a saloon cabin, and intended chiefly for freight. Captain D. H. Shepherd is her commander. The *Ed. F. Dix* is owned by W. Thorwengen, John G. Prather, and John H. Bowen of this city, and cost \$35,000. We understand somebody who wants the *Dix* offered \$50,000 for her. The gay and festive owners of the *Ed. F. Dix* have our warm wishes for their success [*Missouri Democrat* May 16, 1864].

The goods carried by the *Dix* into St. Louis, consisting of tobacco, paper, cement, hides, whiskey, a buggy, etc., were rather typical of the cargoes brought to St. Louis by steamers from the Ohio River. Some of the steamer's cargo, 103 barrels of whiskey, was destined for the liquor business of John G. Prather, apparently, the only one of the boat's owners with merchandise on board. It is possible that the *Ed. F. Dix*, also, carried passengers on her maiden voyage, but these are not mentioned in the newspaper. The article in the *Missouri Democrat* does state that the boat was "intended chiefly for freight," but it did have a "saloon cabin," presumably, meaning it had facilities for accommodating passengers.

An announcement reporting the departure of the *Dix* on May 17 for "Boonville, Glasgow, Lexington, Kansas and Leavenworth" appeared in the May 16 issued of the *Missouri Democrat*, along with announcements for other Missouri River steamers (see Figure 3-10). The departure of the *Ed. F. Dix* was delayed for some reason, the newspaper of May 17 reporting that "The *Ed. F. Dix* is preparing to leave for the Missouri, and will leave today or tomorrow" (*Missouri Democrat* May 17, 1864). Finally, a notice in the paper on May 19 reported:

Many of our acquaintances tell us they have called on board the *Ed. F. Dix*, and that they find her a great little steamer, She will leave for the Missouri to-day at 4 . . .

FOR LEAVENWORTH - The *ED. F. Dix* is loading for the above, and will leave this evening.

This steamer is well adapted to the Missouri, being light draft and commodious. The *Dix* is commanded by Capt. David Sheppard. Messrs Phil Heuer and Lem. McHenry are associated in the office [*Missouri Democrat* May 19, 1864].

On this trip, the *Ed. F. Dix* would travel up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Missouri River, a distance of about 20 miles, and then follow the Missouri west for about 480 miles to Fort Leavenworth. Located on the Missouri not far above the entrance of the Kansas River, Fort Leavenworth (or, often, just Leavenworth), with a population of less than 1,000 in the 1850s, was among the principal ports of call for steamers operating on the lower Missouri River. Steamboat service to Leavenworth from St. Louis had begun in 1829 and had been continuous up to the time of the *Ed. F. Dix* (Petsche 1974:115). The larger boats working on the Missouri, like the *Dix*, commonly traveled only as far up the river as Leavenworth, although some went up to St. Joseph, Council Bluffs, and Omaha if the water level was suitable. The Missouri River presented many hazards to steamboat navigation; it was shallow and rapid and contained numerous sandbars, hangs and snags. River levels fluctuated greatly over the seasons and larger boats could navigate the lower river only for about five months of the year, generally from March or May to August or September (Hunter 1949:224). Smaller steamers with shallower drafts could run for longer periods of time, but even these boats were prevented from traveling during the periods of lowest water or when the river was blocked with ice.

Smaller steamers could and did travel above Leavenworth and the other lower river towns, going as far as Fort Benton, Montana Territory, a distance of over 3,000 miles from St. Louis. Steamboat travel on the upper Missouri began with the arrival of the *Yellow Stone* at Fort Union in 1833, but the first steamboat did not reach Fort Benton until 1859. Steamboat activity on the upper river was minimal prior to the discovery of gold in Montana in 1862 and was limited, primarily, to hauling government supplies, carrying a few settlers, and serving the activities of the American Fur Company (Petsche 1974:117). Additionally, shallow water, snags, and ice essentially closed the upper river to steamboat operations between late November and mid-March (Hunter 1949:224). Those boats that did run on the upper Missouri were small, shallow draft steamers, which in the 1870s were being built with some unique structural characteristics to better adapt them to the conditions of the upper river. Even with these ad-

aptations, the short navigation season and the very long trip generally meant that the “mountain boats” traveling all the way to Fort Benton could make only one trip per year (Hunter 1949:224).

When the *Ed. F. Dix* arrived on the Missouri River, there was a well-established steamboat trade in freight and passengers on the lower river, even though the trade was seasonal for most boats. These steamers carried all sorts of manufactured goods, foodstuffs and merchandise to military outposts and settlers living along the Missouri, in addition to the settlers themselves. Some idea of the types and quantities of supplies carried by upbound Missouri River steamers is seen in the cargo of the steamboat *Bertrand* that sank on April 1, 1865, about 25 miles above Omaha. The *Bertrand* was bound for Fort Benton and the gold fields when she was sunk by a snag. The discovery and excavation of her remains in 1968-1969 recovered a huge variety and quantity of merchandise. The many tons of cargo recovered from inside the *Bertrand*'s hull included foodstuffs (pickles, catsup, pickled fruit, etc.), liquors, patent medicines, clothing (hats, shoes, boots, raincoats etc.), household supplies (all manner of iron pots, buckets, etc.), mining supplies, agricultural supplies (plows, harnesses, etc.), hardware and building supplies (hand tools, nails, etc.) (Petsche 1974). A great variety of well-preserved boxes, barrels, kegs, bottles, etc., which held items of cargo were removed from the wreck. No information on the cargo carried by the *Ed. F. Dix* on its first voyage up the Missouri has been found, but much of the merchandise was probably very similar to that found on the *Bertrand*.

The *Ed. F. Dix* arrived at Fort Leavenworth on May 29th, after a voyage of 10 days. Boats often could make this trip in half the time, and contemporary accounts give no reasons as to why the *Dix* took so long on this first trip up the river. In St. Louis, the *Missouri Democrat* provided information on the arrival of the *Dix* that had appeared in the *Leavenworth Bulletin* of May 29:

The Leavenworth Bulletin of Thursday says: The river at this point remains stationary. Steamers have not much trouble in getting over the bars below and above.

Last night the Mephan and Dix came up with good trip. The former boat left this morning for St. Louis with a large number of passengers and considerable freight.

The Dix started out at 8 o'clock this morning [*Missouri Democrat*, May 30, 1864].

It is obvious that no time was wasted in unloading the boat and taking a downbound cargo aboard. It is assumed that the *Ed. F. Dix* did depart Leavenworth on the morning of May 30, because she arrived back in St. Louis on June 2, a trip of only 4 days. The *Missouri Democrat* reported the arrival of the steamer and provided a complete listing of her cargo and its consignees:

LEAVENWORTH—per E. F. Dix—Capt. Ed Warple 8 rls leather; R. P. Ober & co 12 hhds tob 30 dry hides 4 bales cotton 5 pkgs oil and glass; Booth & son 10 hhds tobacco 1 bbl lard; G. A. Berr 6 hhds tob; Moody, M. & co 5 pkgs 4 cks bacon 3 bbls flaxseed 1 do tallow 12 dry hides; D. A. January & co 1 ck [cask] bacon 2 bbls flaxseed; G. L. Hughes 63 bls hemp and tow; T. H. Larkin 8 bls hemp 8 pkgs sunds 160 dry hides; Carr & Luke 10 bls hemp; McGrew & R. 13 bls hemp; State Tobacco Warehouse 12 hhds tob; C. R. Holthans 4 hhds tob; Wattenburg, B. & co 5 do M. S. Lemp 25 empty hf bbls; Wells bros 7 pkgs wool; Henderson, R. & co 2 pkgs; S. McCartney 4 pkgs bacon; J. F. Haynes 6 hhds tob; Schoolfield & M. 1 box bacon; Harwood, W. & co 33 bls hemp 282 sks wheat 182 do oats 2 hhds tob; Smith, B. & co 115 sks wheat; Baker, B. & co 8 hhds tob; Howard & H. 8 hhds tob 7 hides 33 pcs [packages ?] bacon; Pittman & bro 18 hhds tobacco 52 bls hemp; Robinson & Garrard 11 hemp; Shryock & Rowland 4 cks bacon 2 pkgs flaxseed 17 dry hides; Nanson, Dameron & co 430 pcs bacon 19 dry hides 3 sks d apples 1 hhd tob 2 bls hemp; Seller, Austin & co 17 do hemp 3 cks bacon 5 pkgs; Gilkeson & S. 91 bls hemp 4 hhds tobacco 23 d hides 1 csk bacon 2 sks beans [*Missouri Democrat* June 2, 1864].

The paper indicates that the *Ed. F. Dix* was brought down river by Captain Ed Warple. What happened to David Sheppard, who is reported to have taken the steamer up the river, is unknown. The cargo carried by the *Ed. F. Dix* into St. Louis on June 2 consisted, primarily, of the agricultural products of the middle and lower Missouri River region around Leavenworth and seems to have been rather typical of those carried downstream by the other steamers on the lower river. The principal items of cargo consisted of 96 hogsheads of tobacco, 300 bales of hemp, 268 hides, 397 sacks of wheat and 182 sacks of oats. In addition, the steamer carried a fairly large quantity of bacon, packed in casks and “packages,” as well as smaller amounts of flaxseed, tallow, lard,

wool, dried apples, beans, cotton and some miscellaneous merchandise, including “oil and glass.”

In the 1860s, the area around Leavenworth was an important center for growing tobacco and hemp. The two most important Missouri communities involved in tobacco and hemp agriculture were Parkville, located about 10 miles down river of Leavenworth, and Weston, situated an even shorter distance up the river. The region around Parkville and Weston is part of a larger area commonly called “Little Dixie” that encompasses a rich agricultural belt along the Missouri River. The region derives its name from the early settlers who came, primarily, from the southern states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. When these emigrants began to arrive in the 1820s and 1830s, they brought with them their expertise in growing tobacco and hemp and, also, another critical aspect of southern culture of the period, black slaves. The cultivation of these two crops, and others, prospered in the rich soil of the region and Missouri became one of only a few states west of the Mississippi River that grew tobacco. Tobacco is still grown and harvested in the area today.

The Little Dixie region prospered not only because of the rich soils, but because the Missouri River offered a convenient means of transporting harvested crops to markets in St. Louis and New Orleans (Hurt 1992:ix-xiii). By the 1840s, many steamboats travelling down the Missouri from the Leavenworth area carried some amounts of tobacco. As was true for the *Eastport*, most of the tobacco had been cured and packed into hogsheads, large barrels holding approximately 1000 pounds of leaf. On June 16, 1864, shortly after the *Ed. F. Dix* carried her first tobacco down the Missouri, the *Missouri Democrat* contained the following notice: “The 334 hogsheads brought down by the Mephram the other day, is the largest lot of tobacco ever brought down the Missouri at one time by steamboat or anything else” (*Missouri Democrat* June 16, 1864).

The St. Louis manufactures actively sought products from the Little Dixie farmers and provided an important outlet for their produce. In addition to tobacco, this market produced middlemen and commercial merchants for a variety of commodities, such as, corn, wheat, flour, flax, dried hides, pork, butter, eggs, peaches, apples, cotton and honey. As early as 1821, the state legislature approved a law for the regulation and inspection of tobacco destined for markets outside Missouri. Among its requirements was that tobacco producing counties had to construct

warehouses for storage and handling. In 1843, a state-regulated warehouse was established in St. Louis. This was intended to provide a home market for the tobacco crop and, also, a place that would draw foreign buyers for the export trade. In fact, 12 hogsheads of the tobacco aboard the *Ed. F. Dix* on June 2 were destined for the “State Tobacco Warehouse.” In the 1860s, St. Louis had fifteen tobacco and cigar manufactures producing cigars and chewing tobacco from the Little Dixie tobacco crops. By 1860, St. Louis ranked sixth in production of cigars behind New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Hartford and Baltimore (Hurt 1992:70-71, 82-99). Some of the tobacco processed in St. Louis found its way onto steamboats going back up the Missouri River. Among the material recovered from the wreck of the steamboat *Bertrand* were several forms of tobacco, including cigars, plug cut, shredded and ground. One box was stenciled with “EXTRA FINE MISSOURI WEED, Parkville, Mo”. This tobacco had been carried down river from Little Dixie, probably by steamboat, processed in St. Louis, packed in fancy, mitered boxes of walnut and loaded on the *Bertrand* for shipment back up the river to the mining country in the Montana Territory (Petsche 1974:73).

In the New Orleans market, commission merchants encouraged the farmers of Little Dixie to plant three types of tobacco that would bring the best prices. The first was a dark, nutmeg-brown leaf that when fire-cured and pressed for market became almost black. This type was favored most by European consumers. The second type was a large, broad, thick leaf that when cured turned a cinnamon color. When pressed, this leaf became marbled or spotted, and was most “admired” on the Irish, English, Gibraltar and Spanish markets. The third type of tobacco brought the highest price and was used for cigars. It had a bright yellow leaf (Hurt 1992:80-81).

The second major cash crop for the Little Dixie planters was hemp. As cotton became king in the South, planters needed large quantities of rope to secure the cotton bales for shipment and storage. Hemp grew well in the southern climate and was extensively used to make rope and cordage. Consequently, as the cotton industry expanded to the west, the hemp industry moved with it. Kentucky was a leading hemp producing state and when its emigrants moved into Missouri, they brought hemp agriculture with them. Soon after arriving, many of the settlers acquired land and began planting hemp for commercial production. The hemp trade was directly tied to the supply and demand of cotton production and its market

pricing. As long as cotton production remained high, the hemp crop was a major source of income for Little Dixie planters (Hurt 1992:103, 108). C.L. McGrew from Lexington, located on the Missouri River in Lafayette County below Leavenworth, began a hemp manufacturing company that made rope and twine. In 1855, the McGrew firm purchased a steam engine to power machinery which “hackled the hemp; removed the trash and dirt; and carded, layered, and twisted it into rope” (Hurt 1992:106-107). In the June 2 cargo on the *Ed. F. Dix* is a shipment of 13 bales of hemp for “McGrew & R,” possibly, associated with the McGrew of Lafayette County.

As at Leavenworth, no time was wasted at St. Louis in getting the *Dix* loaded with a new cargo for another trip up river. Just one day after arriving in the city, a notice in the newspaper reported: “We are requested to state that the E. F. Dix is loading on private accounts; that is, she is taking freight from shippers generally. She will leave for Leavenworth to-day” (*Missouri Democrat* June 3, 1864). For Missouri River steamboat operators, like all others, time was money and every effort was made to squeeze as many trips into a season as possible. The shortened season on the Missouri may have made this even more important if good profits were to be made.

The *Ed. F. Dix*, apparently, departed for Leavenworth on or about June 3, traveled to Leavenworth and returned to St. Louis on June 19. On this voyage, it was reported that she “had one of the best trips of freight and passengers of the season, her cargo embracing in part 247 hogsheads tobacco, 430 bales hemp and 200 sacks of grain. She was drawing only four and a half feet, and, is therefore, one of the best low water boats afloat” (*Missouri Democrat* June 20, 1864). Based on the times of arrivals and departures, this appears to have been only the second trip made by the *Dix* on the Missouri. However, the St. Louis newspapers do not always trace the movements of all boats, and some arrivals and departures may have gone unlisted.

The *Ed. F. Dix* had only been working on the river a little over a month when changes in the steamboat’s crew were made. In late June it was reported that “A change has occurred on board the E. F. Dix. She is now commanded by Captain W. W. Baker. Her clerk, Mr. Phil Heuer, goes this morning by railroad to meet her at South Point” (*Missouri Democrat* June 23, 1864). Captain Baker took his steamer up to the Missouri River to Kansas City, a

trip of about 450 miles. Located near the juncture of the Kansas and Missouri rivers, Kansas City, or “Kansas” as it was often called, was a town of only about 1,000 people in the years just before the Civil War, smaller than the nearby “Little Dixie” communities of Parkville and Weston (Lloyd 1856:232).

The *Ed. F. Dix* next appears in the newspapers arriving in St. Louis from Kansas City on July 4. The *Missouri Democrat’s* listing of her cargo reveals that it consisted of typical Little Dixie produce:

KANSAS CITY—Per E. F. Dix—Threlkeld & co 5 pkges wool and skins 3 bxs; 50 sks rye; Robinson & Garrard 1 hhd tobacco; R. P. Ober & co 6 do; McGrew & co 43 bales hemp and tow; Pittman & bro 10 do hemp 2 hhds tobacco; Gilkeson & Stoss 93 bls hemp 5 hhds tobacco; Shultz & Eggers 1 do; Nanson, Damerson & co 3 do; D. Freeman 45 hogs; Harwood, W. & co 323 sks wheat 15 do wool; Sam Virden 2 hhds tobacco [*Missouri Democrat* July 4, 1864].

On the same day, the steamer *Monsoon* arrived in St. Louis from Leavenworth carrying another typical Little Dixie cargo consisting, principally, of tobacco and hemp, as well as corn, bacon, seed, meat and “104 pkgs robes. . . 110 buffaloe [*sic*] hides 12 bls do” (*Missouri Democrat* July 4, 1864). The 104 packages of robes are, like the last two commodities, thought to be made from buffalo hides, which were a fairly common article carried by the Missouri River steamboats of the period. No specific mention is made of the *Dix* carrying “buffalo” hides and the hides that she did carry on her June 2 arrival are thought to have been cow.

The *Ed. F. Dix* had been working on the Missouri River for less than two months, and may have made only three trips, when her owners decided to undertake fairly extensive modifications to her cabin. On July 6, just two days after arriving from Kansas City, it was reported that “The E. F. Dix will go out in about two weeks. She will get a texas and full length cabin; the boiler deck will be run out 15 feet forward, and she will be otherwise improved” (*Missouri Democrat* July 6, 1864). A week later it was reported “the E. F. Dix is having great improvements made aboard. In a few days she will be completed, with a full cabin, &c. She will then load for the Missouri” (*Missouri Democrat* July 14, 1864). The *Dix* was built to serve principally as a “freight boat,” but the modifications undertaken in July indicate that her passenger accommodations were being expanded

and improved. It is not known if her owners saw an opportunity by expanding their abilities to carry passengers or if the freight business was such that it forced them to make the change.

The Burning of the Ed. F. Dix at St. Louis

Before the work on her new cabins was completed, disaster struck the *Ed. F. Dix*. On July 16, the following headlines appeared in the *St. Louis Missouri Democrat*:

EXTENSIVE STEAMBOAT CONFLAGRATION AT THE LEVEE

Steamers Sunshine, Northerner, Glasgow, E. F. Dix, Cherokee and Welcome Destroyed

Loss Nearly Half a Million Dollars

A few minutes before four o'clock Friday morning, a fire was discovered in the starboard cabin of the steamer *E. F. Dix*, and in a few minutes the whole cabin was in flames. The fire in a short time communicated to five other boats, and the whole were burned to the water's edge. It is generally believed the fire was the work of an incendiary. The watchman on the *Dix* stated that the fire originated on the *Cherokee*, but the watchman on the *Glasgow* asserts that he saw it at the commencement, and that it was on the *Dix*. The Government agents had warned all the steamboat agents that they had information of a conspiracy to burn the boats here, and cautioned them to be on the alert . . . An engineer and others connected with the *Cherokee* state that the fire positively originated on the *E. F. Dix*. They saw it. The *Dix* was repairing, and on the afterguard, behind the starboard wheel, wood shavings lay knee deep. These gentlemen note the above location as that where they first saw the fire rushing along and rapidly consuming everything in its inflammable pathway. Therefore, the rumor that the fire originated on the *Cherokee*, falls to the ground . . .

The *Ed. F. Dix*, a new side-wheeler, small and staunch Missouri river boat, which had been running as a *St. Louis* and *Glasgow* packet. She was undergoing improvements, and would have left next Monday for Omaha, having begun to

receive freight. She was valued at \$40,000...The Boatmen's Insurance & Trust Company of this city had the following risks upon the defunct vessels: \$5,000 on the *Glasgow*; \$7,000 on the *Sunshine*; \$5,000 on the *Welcome*, and \$10,000 on the *E. F. Dix*. We understand that the United States Insurance Company had \$25,000 on the boats. The boats lay in the following order: the *Welcome*, farthest down, foot of Locust street, and then followed in succession, the *Cherokee*, *Dix*, *Glasgow*, *Sunshine* and *Northerner*. All the ferryboats—the *Christy*, *Milliken*, &c.—which lay over the river, on the Illinois shore, got up steam with precipitation, and held them to the burning mass. Those of the ferryboats that have fire engines on board joined with the city fire engines in pouring streams into the burning steamers. That these efforts were of signal use is proved by the fact that the hulls of all burned boats are afloat, and one—the *Northerner*—has some of her upper works still standing, including her chimneys. The hulls can all be built upon again, and it is very probable that their machinery will do good service hereafter, by dint of overhauling and repairing [*Missouri Democrat* July 16, 1864].

It was reported that one man was burnt to death on the *Cherokee* and that the total loss to boats and cargoes was on the order of \$600,000 (*St. Louis Republican* July 16, 1864).

News of the fire spread along the river; there was a notice in *The Louisville Daily Journal* on July 16, 1864, that six steamers burned at the levee in *St. Louis*. It was widely suspected that the burning of the steamers was the work of Rebel agents trying to destroy government stores loaded on one of the boats and to disrupt shipping of government supplies. The loss to the United States was noted in correspondence from Col. Lewis B. Parsons in *St. Louis* on July 15, 1864. Parsons wrote: "Our loss only eighty-one tons of commissary stores, valued at about \$16,000, some of which will be saved. The utmost vigilance has for weeks been exercised both by the quartermaster's and provost-marshal's departments" (ORA I:41:209).

Colonel J.H. Baker of the 10th Minnesota Infantry was charged with guarding the waterfront at *St. Louis* and with investigating the cause of the fire. He reported that, prior to the fire, he had received information concerning a possible attempt to burn government property at *St. Louis*, but his investiga-

tion could not verify the suspicions that Confederate “incendiaries” had actually started the blaze (*Missouri Democrat* July 16, 1864). The suspicions of Colonel Baker and others were ultimately proved, but it took several months to capture just one of the accomplices. This fact was reported in a number of river newspapers:

Wm V. Murphy, one of the steamboat burners, who was engaged in the burning of boats in St. Louis, arrived here Tuesday evening in charge of United States Detective Dunford, who arrested him in New Orleans. When arrested he was disguised, and was about leaving for Havana, having British papers on his person. Murphy was arrested last winter and committed to Gratiot Prison, St. Louis, on a charge of steamboat burning, which he did not deny. He was paroled on condition that he would reveal the names of the parties engaged in the plot, but when at liberty he made his escape. He is a desperate character [*New Albany Daily Ledger* May 12, 1865].

After the fire, there is no mention of the *Ed. F. Dix* in local newspapers for about a month. Then, in August, it was reported that “Captain B.R. Pegram has contracted with Carondelet Marine Railway to build up the hull of the burned E.F. Dix into a barge” (*Missouri Democrat* August 13, 1864). The following year, Rush Pegram’s brother, George, appears as principal owner of the steamboat when she was enrolled in St. Louis (see Figure 3-8). George and/or his brother may have purchased the boat after the fire or, possibly, they had acquired the steamer before the fire and were responsible for initiating the construction of her new cabins. If either of these is true, no record of the change of ownership has been found and after this account of her planned conversion to a barge, no mention of the *Dix* appears in the St. Louis newspapers until the following year.

Final Days of the Ed. F. Dix, May - June 23, 1865

The first reference to the *Dix* after her burning and reported conversion to a barge at St. Louis appears nine months later in a Louisville newspaper. On May 13, 1865, the *Louisville Journal* announced that “The E. F. Dix is fast approaching completion. On Thursday steam was raised on her, and painters are now busily engaged on her” (*Louisville Daily Journal* May 13, 1865). What had transpired with the *Dix* during the fall and winter of 1864-1865 is unknown. It is known that the rebuilt steamer was

enrolled at Louisville on May 10 by her owners, George Pegram and Henry Ealer. Also, it appears as if George Pegram, at least, may have held ownership in the steamer since the time of the fire of the previous summer. The vessel’s hull may have been used as a barge for a period of time, or it is possible that Captain Pegram had decided she was worth rebuilding and had taken her to Louisville to have this done. It would seem that nine months was a long time to complete the rebuilding, but with the shortages of labor and material caused by the Civil War such a delay is not impossible. With her rebuild, the *Ed. F. Dix* was about to start a second career. The steamer was now placed into the Mississippi River trade to New Orleans, carrying material and stores for the United States government. The Mississippi was now open and generally safe for steamboat travel and huge quantities of war material and supplies were being carried to points all along the river.

Her painting finished, the *Ed. F. Dix* “was towed up to the foot of Second street” preparatory for her departure from Louisville. On May 20, 1865, an advertisement in a Louisville newspaper contained the notice: “For Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans - E. F. Dix....H. L. Henry, Master will leave city wharf May 20, at 5 p.m. positively. For freight or passage apply on board. T. M. Erwin, Agent” (*Louisville Daily Journal* May 20, 1865). The next day the list of boat departures from Louisville shows the *Dix* headed for New Orleans (*Louisville Daily Journal* May 21, 1865). On May 23, the *Ed. F. Dix* was reported to be in Cairo with a full load of cargo consisting “principally [of] Government forage” (*Missouri Democrat* May 24, 1865).

George Pegram and Henry Ealer were important St. Louis businessmen and when their steamer started on its trip to New Orleans that city’s newspapers, again, took notice. The *Missouri Democrat* reported the *Dix*’s departure from Louisville and provided a brief description of the newly refurbished boat:

The steamer E. F. Dix, just rebuilt for Captain George Pegram, departed to New Orleans early yesterday with a Government trip [from Louisville]. She has entire new upper works, cabin, outfit and machinery, and is a very staunch boat, with heavy, strong guards, extra ironed and extra fastened hull to make her sea worthy, it being designed to place her in the Mobile trade. She is in charge of Captain Henry [*Missouri Democrat* May 25, 1865].

This notice reveals that the owners of the *Dix* intended her to go farther than the Mississippi River; they were going to place their steamer in the “Mobile” trade. It is not sure if this meant the trade between Mobile and New Orleans, which was an active coastal trade participated in, mainly, by “coastal” steamers designed for open Gulf conditions (Pearson and Saltus 1996), or in the river trade north of Mobile on the Mobile, Alabama and Tombigbee rivers where typical western river steamboats, such as the *Ed. F. Dix*, were used. The statement that she was “extra ironed” and had an “extra fastened hull to make her sea worthy” suggests that the plans were to use the *Dix* in the coastal trade between New Orleans and Mobile.

The U.S. Army Quartermaster Department and Steamboats

The Louisville and St. Louis newspapers reveal that the *Ed. F. Dix* was carrying a government cargo when she departed Louisville. Prior to this, particularly while working on the Missouri River, the *Dix* seems to have been unassociated with Civil War matters. As evidenced by the fire at St. Louis, however, the *Dix* could not escape the war and, with her departure from Louisville in the spring of 1865, the *Ed. F. Dix* was to join the many other steamboats in the west serving under hire or contract to the United States government.

Throughout the Civil War, packet and freight steamers played an important and, often, key role as troop transports and cargo carriers. Railroads were used where possible, but in many campaigns, such as in the west, the steamboat was the primary form of transport (Gibson and Gibson 1995b:i). The movement of supplies and personnel fell under the jurisdiction of the Army Quartermaster Department that, in essence, operated its own navy during the Civil War. The tremendously complex task of directing all aspects of using steamboats for moving troops and cargoes in the Department of the Mississippi, ultimately, fell upon a very capable individual, Lewis B. Parsons. Parsons was from Ohio, where he had been a school teacher and attorney and had served as a manager for the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad (Gibson and Gibson 1995b:536). He was a friend of George B. McClellan, president of the railroad, and, also, of Abraham Lincoln, whom he apparently had met when an attorney. With their influence, at the start of the war he received an appointment to now-Brigadier General McClellan’s staff and, later, served under General John C. Fremont in his Quar-

termaster Department in St. Louis. In late 1861, Parsons was given the responsibility for dispatching all river transportation in the west. When he took over this position there was no centralized management and little organization in acquiring steamboat transportation for the military. The system was in disarray and, also, corruption was rampant. The Union Quartermaster Department was contracting for the services of steamers without competitive bids and a select group of steamboat owners were obtaining most of the contracts at exorbitant prices. Rumors were that many of the steamboatmen making most of the money had close ties to General Fremont. An example of the corrupt practices encountered by Parsons concerned one of the original owners of the *Ed. F. Dix*, St. Louis businessman John H. Bowen. Bowen, while working as a charter agent for the government, made arrangements to hire the steamer *New Sam Gaty*. The captain of the *Gaty* submitted a bill for \$400 after his first trip, but John Bowen told the captain that the trip was worth \$500, the amount ultimately billed to the government. The captain, however, was paid the \$400 he had originally charged, Bowen pocketed the extra \$100, in addition to his standard agent fee (Gibson and Gibson 1995b:538). It is not known what action was taken against John Bowen, but this was just one transaction by one of many agents working for the Quartermaster Department. Lewis Parsons, soon, instituted reforms that eventually led to the efficient and cost effective use of steamboats by the government. General M.C. Meigs, Quartermaster General of the Army, recognized Lewis Parsons’ abilities, and in 1863 appointed him Chief of River Transportation on western rivers. This, essentially, gave Parsons centralized control over obtaining and using all steamboats in the west (Gibson and Gibson 1995b:537, 551). Lewis Parsons ended his military service as a Brigadier General.

By 1863, the government had hired or contracted with a very large number of the steamboats still in service on the western rivers. In May of that year the Quartermaster General’s Office in Washington provided Assistant Quartermasters with new, more rigorous guidelines for chartering vessels. Quartermaster officers were informed that too many vessels had been chartered at excessive prices and they were directed to “take stringent measures to reduce these expenses by discharging all Steamers whose rates appear to be excessive.” Additionally, they were provided printed forms to use for chartering vessels and were given a range of rates to pay. For “side wheel Steamers” the suggested rates were “from 35

to 50 cts per day per ton registered measurement” [National Archives 1863].

The extent to which the Army used steamboats is revealed in a notice appearing the *Louisville Journal* in October 1864:

We understand that the Quartermaster stationed at Cairo shipped during the fiscal year ending with June last 106,000 tons of freight and 225,000 men. The aggregate of government transportation was obtained from the Quartermaster’s accounts. It indicates that Cairo is a very extensive distributing point for the Government in men and supplies [*Louisville Daily Journal* October 24, 1864].

The Quartermaster Department, through its Assistant Quartermasters and other officers stationed at various river towns, acquired vessels in a number of ways. A few were built, some were bought outright, others were obtained under time charter or contracted on the basis of freight carried. When necessary, and when time was of the essence, vessels were seized outright. For example, in early 1865 the Quartermaster Department, facing an immediate need for transports, seized a number of steamboats on the Ohio River, as reported in the *Missouri Democrat*:

We learn that Government has taken at Cairo the Magenta, Mississippi and Atlantic, and contemplated taking also the Ida Handy upon her arrival from New Orleans. These steamers and the many others recently seized, are ordered, we learn, to proceed to Eastport on the Tennessee, and it is supposed they are to return with troops [*Missouri Democrat* February 2, 1865].

The previous day, the newspaper had reported on the seizure of the boats, noting that some were “of the opinion that the steamers seized at Cairo are for a Red River expedition” (*Missouri Democrat* February 1, 1865).

It is assumed that the *Ed. F. Dix* was under charter or contract to the government when she left Louisville in May 1865 and, most likely, it was a contract based on the amount of cargo carried over a specified distance, the type of contract that Parsons preferred. These contracts, commonly, were made for a given period of time. However, no record of any such contract with the *Dix* has been found. An example of a typical contract awarded to steamboats is given in the following newspaper description:

J.J. Mitchell, Esq. was yesterday awarded the contract by the Quartermaster’s Department, for the transportation of freight, &c., for the twelve months, commencing April 1st, from St. Louis to Cairo, and to New Orleans and other points and return. The contract to Mitchell is in connection with David White, Esq., of the Merchants and People’s line of packets, which line will do the business of the Government transportation. This comprises all pound freights, soldiers, officers, cattle, horses, mules, wagons, &c., at regulated rates [*Missouri Democrat* March 29, 1865].

The rates to be used in this contract with J.J. Mitchell had previously been published in the newspaper and are listed below:

The following are the rates of freight by steamer from this city (Peoria) to St. Louis and all points on the river below Havana. Pound freight includes grain and produce of all kinds:

Pound freight, per 100 pounds	20c
Hay, hard pressed, per ton	5.00
Hay, loose pressed, per ton	6@7.00
Horses, in lots of ten or more, each ..	5.00
Flour, per barrel.....	40
Pork, “ “	60
Salt, “ “	50
Up freights 30c per 100 pounds	

[*Missouri Democrat* March 14, 1865].

The government, commonly, specified how each article would be packaged. A notice from the Office Supervising Commissary appeared in newspapers in St. Louis asking for sealed bids for subsistence stores for the U.S. Army. Bidders were required to submit samples of bread, soap and candles. When the contract was awarded, each package was “to be marked on one end with the contents and the name of the person furnishing the article, and the date of purchase” (*Missouri Democrat* March 29, 1865). The following were the articles required in this particular bid:

3,000 Barrels Pork — Mess or prime mess. The pork must have been packed from the block, and the prime mess cut in accordance with the directions of K. B. Getty.

200,000 pounds Clear or Clear ribbed Sides, thoroughly smoked and packed in tierces containing not more than 450 pounds.

300,000 pounds Bacon Shoulders, thoroughly smoked and packed in tierces of not more

than 450 pounds.
300,000 pounds plain Hams, thoroughly smoked
and packed in tierces containing not more
than 450 pounds.
3,000,000 pounds Hard Bread, in 50 pound boxes
of the usual dimensions. The bread to
be made from equal proportions of in-
spected superfine and simple extra flour.
400,000 pounds good Bar Soap, to be made by
boiling, and only from good materials,
free from clay-soluble glass or other
adulteration, and to have no unpleas-
ant odor.
100,000 pounds best quality Star Candles, full
weight.

[*Missouri Democrat* March 29, 1865]

In May 1865, when the *Ed. F. Dix* started down the Mississippi, the war was fast reaching a conclusion. General Robert E. Lee had surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House the previous month, and most Confederate commands elsewhere surrendered soon afterwards. Because of this, a tremendous number of United States troops were discharged, while others were reassigned to support an army of occupation. The resulting movement of all these soldiers required huge numbers of steamboats. The Governments' need often came unexpectedly:

The seizure of the *Champion No. 6* by the Government Saturday prevented an excursion of Cincinnati picnics [*sic*]. The Government requiring their services, a clean sweep was made of all the boats lying at Cincinnati on Saturday, except the Louisville mail packets . . . [*Louisville Daily Journal* June 6, 1865].

Government demand for boats reached many ports. Reporting on the situation in St. Louis, the *Missouri Democrat* revealed that even mail packets were not exempt from seizure:

MOVEMENTS OF BOATS ON THE OHIO—We learn that the Government has taken possession of at least one hundred steamers within the week—some estimate the number at 150—for the purpose of transporting the army West, from the B. & O. road, and Western Virginia. The Louisville papers say that the two evening mail boats, the *General Buell* and *Major Anderson*, were taken Saturday, also one or both of the *People's Line* packets, the *St. Charles* and the *St. Nicholas*; also the *Rose Hite* and *Elnora*,

Evansville packets, the *Norman* and all the idle boats at Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, making a fleet of fully one hundred boats, including those already in commission: all, we believe to concentrate at Parkersburg, there to await further orders.

The Government requiring their services, a clean sweep was made of all the boats at the levee on Saturday, except the Louisville mail packets . . . The *Rob Roy*, for Nashville: *Darling*, for Memphis: *Caroline*, for St. Louis, and *Silver Spray*, for New Orleans, loaded and ready to leave, were ordered to discharge their cargoes, and go to Parkersburg with the fleet after troops. This is the most effectual and extensive cleaning out of boats by order of the Government since the rebellion commenced. It was rather amusing to see the general hunting up and pressing pilots, who were scarce. Captain Booth, of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Line, went out pilot of the *Havana*...The officers of no steamers in port have any certainty but that within an hour they may be loading for New Orleans, Mobile, or the Upper Missouri, and crowded with Uncle Sam's boys. At Parkersburg there are 50,000 soldiers awaiting the arrival of boats, and Uncle Samuel is not very particular in gobbling up vessels by the wholesale. Already 28 steamers have been laid hold of and gone, and it is pretty certain that more will be required immediately [*Missouri Democrat* June 7, 1865].

The Ed. F. Dix in Government Service

The *Ed. F. Dix* was one of the many steamboats caught up in this mass government seizure toward the end of the war. The day of the steamer's arrival in New Orleans is not known, but she had reached the city by May 30, because on that day the *Dix* was seized by the Assistant Quartermaster in New Orleans, Captain F.W. Perkins; the quartermaster officer in charge of "water transportation" (ORA I:53:608). Information on the seizure is contained in records relating to a claim against the government pursued by the owners of the *Dix*, George Pegram and Henry Ealer, after the steamer's loss on Red River. Unfortunately, the principal file associated with that claim is now missing from the records of the National Archives. This claim, designated Case No. 254 in the records of the Third Auditors Office, Treasury Department (Record Group 217), was in Treasury Department files until March 19, 1907, when it was

removed and never returned. Even though this principal case file is missing, other documentation relating to the Pegram-Ealer claim is extant that sheds light on what happened to the *Ed. F. Dix* upon her arrival in New Orleans.

On October 23, 1865, A.M. Gangerver, "Acting Auditor" in the Treasury Department wrote to Colonel C.G. Sawtelle, with the Army Quartermaster Department in New Orleans, in reference to the claim, noting that the *Dix* had been lost "while in the military service of the United States under impressment made on the 30th May last by F.W. Perkins" (Gangerver to Sawtelle October 23, 1865). A few weeks later, John Wilson, Third Auditor, wrote to Major General Edward R.S. Canby, commander of the newly formed "Department of the Gulf" in New Orleans, trying to obtain information on the government's liability in the *Dix* case. Wilson wrote that it was established that the *Ed. F. Dix* had been "taken into service" on May 30 by Captain Perkins, but he wanted to know if Perkins "was authorized by you to seize the steamer" and if the General knew if the "said boat was so seized and impressed against the wishes of the owners" (Wilson to Canby November 10, 1865). Canby's response to the questions are unknown, but it is known why Captain Perkins wanted the *Ed. F. Dix*. On June 7, Perkins wrote to Colonel Arthur Edwards with information on the status of steamers under his charge. Perkins wrote:

In reply to your communication of this date, regarding chartered vessels, I have the honor to report the steamer "Camargo" is likely to be needed for some time to come in the vicinity of Brashear City & in Bayou Teche. The "Bart Able" and "E. F. Dix" will be required in moving cavalry up the Red River" [Perkins to Edwards June 7, 1865].

Captain Perkins implies in his report that the *Ed. F. Dix* was under charter at this time, although, the record seems to clearly indicate that he had seized the steamer. News of the seizure of the *Dix* even appeared in the St. Louis newspapers, with the *Missouri Democrat* noting that "The E. F. Dix is reported taken at New Orleans, to go up Red river, when she was about to leave for the Yazoo" (*Missouri Democrat* June 10, 1865). The other vessel mentioned by Captain Perkins, the *Bart Able* was the 206-ft sidewheeler built for the Merchant and Peoples Line of St. Louis and named for Barton Able, a prominent steamboatman of the city. As noted earlier, after the war, the *Bart Able* was owned by a group of

St. Louis businessmen that included John G. Prather and William Thorwegan, former owners of the *Ed. F. Dix*.

When Captain Perkins seized the *Ed. F. Dix*, the Army in the west was in desperate need of transports to carry men and material to garrison recently surrendered Confederate territory west of the Mississippi. In addition, steamboats were needed to move troops into Texas where a number of Confederate units had split from their parent commands and refused to surrender. On May 26, 1865, Confederate General E. Kirby Smith surrendered all Confederate forces in the Trans-Mississippi Department to Major General Canby. However, some troops in Texas ignored Kirby Smith's surrender and the general, himself, fled to Mexico in violation of the terms of his agreement with General Canby. It was reported that as many as 4,000 Confederate soldiers had crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico where it was feared they may join forces with the French under Maximilian and return to try to take Texas. Abraham Lincoln had only recently been assassinated and President Andrew Johnson wanted to quickly crush the rebel holdouts in Texas and, also, demonstrate that the United States would not tolerate the violation of her borders by a foreign power (Gibson and Gibson 1995b:510). A large military force was organized for the Texas expedition, under the overall command of Major General Philip H. Sheridan.

The region falling under General Sheridan's command was designated the Military Division of the Southwest and included all of the area west of the Mississippi and south of the Arkansas rivers. The force gathered by Sheridan for the move into Texas included infantry drawn from the Department of Arkansas and the Military Division of West Mississippi, the entire Twenty Fifth Corps, which had to be moved from Virginia, plus approximately 9,000 cavalry collected from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and west Tennessee. Even before Sheridan arrived in New Orleans, a substantial number of troops had been sent to occupy the area along the Red River and portions of Texas, including Galveston (ORA I:48:1:298). In order to strike quickly, Sheridan planned to move much of the remaining force by steamship along the Gulf of Mexico to several points on the Texas coast. There were not enough suitable ocean-going steamers operating in the Gulf of Mexico to support the operation, and vessels had to be obtained on the East Coast. In the later part of May and early June, a large fleet of transports loaded with a division of infantry from the Twenty Fifth Corps, plus

one brigade of cavalry and one of artillery departed City Point, Virginia, for the middle and lower Texas coast. As General Sheridan reported, these troops had a very difficult time landing in Texas because of poor harbors, the great draft of the sea-going transport vessels, and the absence of suitable lighters to convey troops ashore. Later, the Fourth Army Corps, consisting of about 10,000 men, arrived in New Orleans and Sheridan dispatched it by steamer to Indianola on the central Texas coast (ORA I:48:1:291-300).

While waiting for this main body of troops to arrive, Sheridan ordered two cavalry columns to travel by steamer up the Red River to Shreveport and Alexandria and then to move overland into east Texas. One column, consisting of 5,000 troopers, was under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt. The other, consisting of about 4,500 men, was commanded by Major General George Armstrong Custer (Gibson and Gibson 1995b:511). The *Ed. F. Dix*, was among a number of steamers involved in carrying these cavalrymen up the Red. No official documents have been found that detail the *Ed. F. Dix*'s role in carrying these troops, but a correspondent to a New Orleans newspaper, on board the *Dix* when she sank, wrote that the steamer was "on her way to Shreveport with a portion of the 1st Louisiana Cavalry, under command of Capt. S. B. Alger" (*New Orleans Times* June 28, 1865).

The "1st Louisiana Cavalry," or more appropriately, the First Louisiana Regiment of Cavalry, Volunteers, was a Federal unit organized at New Orleans in August 1862, one of a number of military units formed in the city after its capture by the United States. The First Louisiana served exclusively in Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast until it was mustered out in December 1865 (Dyer 1994:1212). Elements of the regiment served around New Orleans, in southwestern Louisiana along Bayous Lafourche and Teche and in the Atchafalaya Basin, participating in actions such as the capture of Donaldsonville on the Mississippi River, and the fighting at Fort Bisland and other locations along Bayou Teche. The regiment was at the siege of Port Hudson and was in General Bank's army during the Red River Campaign in the spring of 1864, fighting at Pleasant Hill, Mansfield and Yellow Bayou. The regiment lost 49 killed and wounded in the engagements along Red River (ORA I:34:261). In February 1865, the First Louisiana was ordered to Pensacola and participated in the campaign against Mobile, after which the regiment marched overland to Vicksburg, arriving there in early June.

Major Harai Robinson was commander of the First Louisiana during much of 1863 when it was serving around New Orleans and in south and southwestern Louisiana. Major Robinson was promoted and took command of the Third Brigade of Cavalry, which included the First Louisiana (Robinson n.d.). Major Algernon S. Badger was given command of the First Louisiana and led it during the Red River Campaign, at Mobile and when the regiment was ordered up the Red River in Sheridan's campaign against Texas. By January 1865, Algernon Badger had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. In September 1864, the Second Louisiana Regiment of Cavalry was merged into the First Regiment.

The First Louisiana arrived at Vicksburg on June 4, 1865, after a long march from Mobile. The regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Badger, was part of the Third Brigade of Cavalry, now commanded by Brigadier General Thomas J. Lucas. The other elements of the Third Brigade were the Second Illinois Cavalry, the Fourth Wisconsin Cavalry, the Tenth Indiana Cavalry and the Second Massachusetts Battery (ORA I:49:2:887). On June 9, 1865, General Sheridan named Major General Wesley Merritt his "Chief of Cavalry" and placed him in command of six cavalry regiments with orders for Shreveport by steamboat and then overland to Texas. One of these regiments was the First Louisiana. The others were the Second Illinois, the Second New Jersey, the Eighteenth New York, the Tenth Illinois and the Third Michigan. On June 19, General Sheridan's headquarters in New Orleans issued orders replacing the Second New Jersey with the Fourth Wisconsin Regiment (ORA I:48:2:917). Major General George Custer, leading the other cavalry column up Red River, had under his command five cavalry regiments; the Seventh Indiana, the First Iowa, the Fifth Illinois, the Twelfth Illinois and the Second Wisconsin (ORA I:48:2:866, 917). Custer was to take his men by steamboat to Alexandria from where they would move overland into Texas.

On June 5, Major General Canby's headquarters issued Special Orders No. 149 which informed several cavalry regiments in the Department of the Gulf, including the First Louisiana, that they were being transferred to Sheridan's command, the Military Division of the Southwest. The order stated:

The following-named regiments will immediately be prepared for taking the field, and reported to and held subject to the orders of Major-General Sheridan, commanding Military Di-

vision of the Southwest: Eighteenth New York Cavalry, now at New Orleans; Tenth Illinois Cavalry, now at New Orleans; Third Michigan Cavalry, now at Baton Rouge; First Louisiana Cavalry, now at Vicksburg; Second Illinois Cavalry, now at Vicksburg; Fourth Wisconsin Cavalry, now at Vicksburg. Any deficiencies in horses, equipment, or arms, will at once be supplied from the cavalry remaining in the department [ORA I:48:2:778].

On the same day, Colonel C.G. Sawtelle, Chief Quartermaster in Sheridan's command, notified Colonel S.B. Holabird, Chief Quartermaster in the Department of the Gulf in New Orleans, that steamboat transportation was needed immediately to move the cavalry units up Red River:

Col. S.B. Holabird,
Chief Quartermaster, Department of the Gulf:

COLONEL: Transportation is required for the following regiments of cavalry immediately to Shreveport on Red River: From New Orleans, Eighteenth New York Cavalry, 700 men and horses; Tenth Illinois Cavalry, 900 men and horses. From Baton Rouge, Third Michigan Cavalry, 800 men and horses. From Vicksburg, First Louisiana Cavalry, 650 men and horses; Second Illinois Cavalry, 450 men and horses; Fourth Wisconsin Cavalry, . . . Major-General Sheridan is exceedingly anxious to have this cavalry transported with the least possible delay [ORA I:48:2:776].

In addition to New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Vicksburg, some of the cavalry units to be moved up the Red were in Memphis and there was an urgency to move all of these troops. Colonel Holabird was informed by his headquarters that he should take any measures necessary to secure the required "light-draft river steamers" by "seizure or otherwise" (ORA I:48:2:776; I:53:608). It would appear that the *Ed. F. Dix* was seized almost a week before these orders were given, but everyone knew by late May that Sheridan was going to need steamboat transportation and Captain Perkins would have been on the lookout for usable steamers. He probably grabbed the *Dix* before her owners could take the boat out of New Orleans to the Yazoo River or to Mobile, as seems to have been their intention (*Missouri Democrat* June 10, 1865).

On June 6, Captain J.N. Givens, a Quartermaster officer in New Orleans, was ordered to Vicksburg

to superintend the outfitting of the First Louisiana, Second Illinois, and Fourth Wisconsin for their move to Texas. Givens was told that the three regiments were to "be fully mounted and equipped" and any surplus mounts would be assigned to the Ninth and Tenth Indiana Cavalry, also, at Vicksburg (ORA I:48:2:791). Captain Givens may have traveled to Vicksburg on the *Ed. F. Dix*, although this cannot be confirmed. On June 21, Brigadier General J.R. West, in Alexandria, wrote to General Sheridan's headquarters in New Orleans that General Merritt's regiments "from New Orleans and Baton Rouge have sufficient forage, but I have my doubts about those coming from Vicksburg" (ORA I:48:2:956), supporting the fact that some units were shipped directly from Vicksburg. This would have included the First Louisiana.

The Final Voyage of the Ed. F. Dix, June 1865

The exact date of the departure of the *Ed. F. Dix* from Vicksburg is not known, but Colonel C.G. Sawtelle later reported that the cavalry units in Vicksburg began to leave about June 18 (ORA I:53:1:608). The *Ed. F. Dix* may have left Vicksburg on June 20, the day the *Emperor*, another steamer carrying troops to the Red River, departed the city (Hewett 1996:439). Men, horses, equipment and supplies of the First Louisiana would have been loaded aboard the *Dix* at the Vicksburg waterfront. The equipment included "land transportation" necessary to support the march into Texas, presumably referring to wagons (ORA I:53:608). On June 6, General Lucas had been ordered to "Select [a] camping-ground as near the river as possible" because the men would be moved very soon (ORA I:48:2:791). The First Louisiana was an experienced regiment, probably the reason they were selected for the Texas expedition. The men had been in action many times, in fact, while waiting in Vicksburg, Private Thomas Riley, of Company D, was awarded a Medal of Honor for gallantry in action and the capture of a "rebel flag" in the fighting around Mobile (ORA I:49:1:103). However, the First Louisiana was probably worn out by the time it arrived in Vicksburg. General Lucas reported that his command had been "almost continually on the march" for two months and the mounts were in poor shape (ORA I:49:1:138). The men and horses would have received some well-deserved rest while they waited in Vicksburg for the steamers.

During the first half of June, the newspapers were full of reports of the planned incursion into Texas

and the movement of steamboats on Red River. On June 18, 1865, the *New Orleans Times* reported “We learn from Shreveport that five thousand cavalry and a colored regiment of infantry had started for the interior of Texas to garrison the town and protect the citizens” (*New Orleans Times* June 18, 1865). Several newspapers even carried a warning about the continued dangers of Confederate “torpedoes” on the Red River:

As the Government is about to send a fleet of boats to the Red River country, I would press upon the minds of those who have charge of the boats to look out for torpedoes from the mouth of Little river and Lake Bastino. The rebe’s, no doubt, thought Gen. Banks would attack Alexandria by this direction, as it is only thirty miles distant from the head of the lake by land. They may have sunk these infernal machines to obstruct the passage of transports to look out well when in Log Bayou below Shreveport. As I have been piloting for some time in these localities, I feel it my duty to report these facts through some good journal. I would recommend to run a slow bell at all these bayous and crossings in the rivers, and particularly at Snag Island, in Red river.

Yours, &c.

WABASH

[*Missouri Democrat* June 15, 1865]

Others reported that there was no danger of torpedoes and they seem to have been correct. There was, however, concern about the river level. Through the early part of June, the Red River was high and steamers had no trouble getting to Shreveport, but by June 13 reports were that the river had begun to fall rapidly (ORA I:48:2:866). In New Orleans, it was reported that “Freight for Red River for the past few days has been rather scarce; and besides, the last report from the Red River states that that stream is falling very fast, with only six feet water on Grand Ecore bar” (*New Orleans Times* June 24, 1865). On June 21, Brigadier General J.R. West at Alexandria noted that “The river is falling rapidly above, but there will be no particular difficulty in getting General Merritt’s [*sic*] cavalry forward” (ORA I:48:2:956). By that date, portions of General Custer’s command, the Seventh Indiana and part of the Second Wisconsin, had arrived and, at least, one of General Merritt’s regiments, the Second Illinois, had been sent on up to Shreveport. The Second Illinois had come from Vicksburg, but Brigadier General West, specifically, stated that the two other regiments coming from Vicksburg, the Fourth Wiscon-

sin and the First Louisiana, had “not yet been heard from” (ORA I:48:956).

On departing Vicksburg, the *Ed. F. Dix*, presumably in the company of other steamers transporting cavalry, would have traveled the approximately 175 miles down the Mississippi to the mouth of the Red, entered the Red and steamed towards Alexandria, another 335 miles. Naval gunboats accompanied the transports for part of their voyage, because on May 30, General Sheridan had asked if the Navy could supply “one or two gunboats” to patrol the Red River and provide protection to the transports from possible attack by “lawless” elements (ORN I:27:225, 226). By the first week of June, Lieutenant Commander W.E. Fitzhugh, captain of the gunboat *Ouachita*, had 9 vessels, including two ironclads, at the mouth of Red River waiting to provide any necessary protection to the army transports (ORN I:27:226). While he was on the Red convoying the cavalry transports, Lieutenant Commander Fitzhugh took possession of the Confederate ironclad *Missouri*, the last of the rebel ironclad gunboats to surrender (ORN I:27:229-230).

On June 22, Captain Richard Sinnott, bringing the steamboat *B.L. Hodge* down river from Shreveport, on his arrival in New Orleans reported that he had met the steamers “Dix, Emperor and Lilly” at “Casandria” on Red River (*New Orleans Bee* June 24, 1865). Casandria was a way landing located about 55 miles below Alexandria (Cayton 1881:53; Norman 1942:529). The steamer identified as “Lilly” was probably the 256-ton sternwheeler built in Louisville in 1864 that was under government charter from June 4 to July 27, 1865 (Gibson and Gibson 1995a:200; Way 1994:287). The *Emperor* was the 245-ton sternwheeler built at Murfreesville, Virginia, in 1863 (Way 1994:151) and known to have been under government charter in the spring of 1865 (Gibson and Gibson 1995a:104). Aboard the *Emperor* were members of Company A of the First Louisiana Cavalry (Hewett 1996:439) and it is presumed that the *Lilly*, also, was transporting cavalrymen from Vicksburg.

The *Ed. F. Dix*, carrying “a portion” of the First Louisiana, and the other steamers, probably reached Alexandria on June 22, the day after Brigadier General West reported the regiment had not yet arrived. The *Dix*, at least, lay over that night at Alexandria, departing for Shreveport early the following day, June 23. At nine o’clock that morning the *Ed. F. Dix* struck the wreck of the sunken gunboat *Eastport*, located

about 75 miles above Alexandria. The gunboat's iron armor punctured the wooden hull of the *Dix*, producing a large hole on the port side near the bow, and the steamer sank quickly, coming to rest directly on top of the *Eastport*. The first mention of the sinking appeared in an Alexandria newspaper: "The steamer E. F. Dix on her upward trip was sunk on the wreck of the ironclad *Eastport*, near Montgomery, and is, we learn, a total loss. No lives were lost" (*Alexandria Louisiana Democrat* June 28, 1865). A first hand account of the sinking comes from A.M. Samford, who was a passenger on the steamer:

The Loss of the Steamer E. F. Dix

To the Editor of the N. O. Times - To what a contracted horizon does man's vision extend! How hope's beautiful flowers lie withered and dead where we fondly thought to pluck her rich, sweet, lusty fruits, in joy! Nay, even before we reach the point, in time or space, where we looked for her bright development-her happy realization-we often find her promise false and ourselves her unhappy dupes. This lesson was forcibly impressed on your correspondent, an hour ago, by the sinking of the splendid steamer E F Dix, Capt. H. L. Henry, while on her way to Shreveport with a portion of the 1st Louisiana Cavalry, under command of Capt. S. B. Alger. Circumstances had intensified the writer's eagerness to go forward, and home, and babes and friends all were, in his imagination, eagerly expecting his return, after a long absence. And the prospect was flattering of an uninterrupted forward movement. Steadily, though not rapidly, our proud vessel - new and staunch - was moving - on. Our courteous and affable Captain was experienced - knew his duty and was faithful in its performance. The pilots were acquainted with their business, reliable and sober. Indeed, I do not think I have ever been passenger on any vessel, the officers and crew of which inspired me with greater confidence, and so completely set at rest all apprehension of danger or accident by their manifest knowledge of their business, and their diligent attention to all its detail. Perfect security - this was the feeling of your correspondent and of all on board. But alas! how shall we account for the accidents that befel us! They baffle reason - put philosophy to shame, and stand beyond the reach of speculation, wide as its range.

At 9 o'clock a. m., while making a bend one mile below Montgomery, La. on Red River, our boat struck what is said to be the wreck of

the gunboat *Eastport*, and in twenty minutes was resting on the bottom of this muddy and tortuous river. For a few minutes there was some agitation among those less accustomed than others to travel on steamboats, and this excitement was all the greater from the assurance of perfect safety previously experienced by every one. But this was speedily dissipated by the sober calmness of Capt. Henry and his officers, all of whom promptly assured us, not only by their declarations, but by their thorough self-possession of the absence of all cause of apprehension. Orders had been received at Alexandria not to run at night, and Capt. Henry obeyed them last night, to the infinite aggravation of the writer's patience. But the accident of to-day - an accident unavoidable even by the greatest care employed by the captain and crew - proves the wisdom of this order. So powerless are we all, at all times, against the hidden accidents of life! What a mere machine is man in the hands of the pavilioned God, whose finger touches a thousand invisible springs in the inexplicable and complicated machinery of nature!

A. M. SAMFORD

On board E. F. Dix June 23, 1865.

[*New Orleans Times* June 28, 1865]

A.M. Samford's rather flowery account states that only "a portion" of the first Louisiana was aboard the *Dix*. What portion is unreported. Some of the regiment may have been on other steamers, but at least one company seems to have been detached and was serving in south Louisiana at the time. On May 30, Brigadier General R.A. Cameron commanding at Brashear City, Louisiana (now Morgan City), reported that he had sent "Company K, First Louisiana Cavalry" to the town of Washington, Louisiana, to garrison the town and protect the local citizens "from marauders." Coincidentally, the men had been sent to Brashear City aboard the steamboat *Bart Able*, the steamer mentioned with the *Ed. F. Dix* by Captain Perkins (ORA I:48:2:680) and associated with some of the owners of the *Dix*. Company K had been detached from the regiment since early in 1865, and it is not known if they completed their garrison duty in Washington in time to participate in the Texas expedition (Dyer 1994:1212).

The Captain Alger mentioned in the account of the sinking was Captain Samuel B. Alger of the First Louisiana Cavalry. The Official Army Register (1865:1155) reports that Captain Alger was in the "First Regiment" of the First Louisiana Cavalry,

possibly referring to his association with the original regiment, prior to the absorption of the Second Louisiana Cavalry in September 1864

One can only speculate as to why the *Dix* struck the *Eastport*. A.M. Samford noted that the pilots aboard seem to have known their business and he wrote that the captain of the *Dix*, H.L. Henry, was able and careful. According to Samford, the captain and the pilots had been warned not to run at night, presumably, because of the low water conditions, and they had heeded these warnings (*New Orleans Times* June 28, 1865). Captain Sinnott, who had seen the *Dix* at Casandria, reported when he arrived in New Orleans that the Red River was falling fast (*New Orleans Bee* June 24, 1865). He is likely to have conveyed this information to those on the *Dix* when they met on Red River. In addition, boat pilots had been given warnings to be on the look out for “torpedoes” and, surely, they would have been extra vigilant. Apparently, river conditions were such that the remains of the *Eastport* were not visible, but still dangerous to steamboats. That this was true is indicated by the fact that the *Ed. F. Dix* was not the only steamer to strike the wreck during June of 1865. Just a few days after the reports of the sinking of the *Dix* were printed, the following notice appeared in the *New Orleans Times*:

From the officers of the Monsoon we learn that the transport steamer Iowa, ascending the Red River, struck the wreck of the gunboat Eastport and sunk two miles above, at Montgomery Point. This is the second boat in eight days that has struck the same wreck, the steamer E. F. Dix being the first one. The *Dix* lies across the wreck of the *Eastport*. The steamer Monsoon having been released from Government duty, will resume her place in the Coast trade again [*New Orleans Times* June 30, 1865].

At the same time, New Orleans papers reported on the loss of another Red River steamboat, noting: “The steamer Emma, with a cargo of ice, sunk within a few miles of the city, the forepart of the week. The owners of boats valuing their crafts should employ none but Red River pilots from and to the mouth of the river” (*New Orleans Bee* June 29, 1865). This report implies that some boats were not using Red River pilots. Whether this was true for the *Iowa* or the *Dix* is unknown, although Samford’s account suggests the pilots were familiar with the river. One does wonder how the *Iowa* could have missed seeing the wreck of the *Eastport* considering that the

170-ft-long *Dix* now rested on top of it. Perhaps the *Dix* had broken up in this short time and what was left was entirely beneath the water. A.M. Samford does state that the boat sank rapidly and the few other accounts of the loss indicate that nothing from the boat could be salvaged.

A few days after the sinking of the *Dix*, reports about survivors appeared. The *New Orleans Times* noted that “The steamer Hazel Dell, from Shreveport, arrived here yesterday with the following passengers: From the wreck of the steamer E. F. Dix: Frank Rodgers, E. M. Jones, B. Caffles (spelling ?), W. Ray, P. Tolon, C. Bailey, R. H. Lee, P. Carsey, E. Hailey” (*New Orleans Times* June 28, 1865). There is no indication if these individuals were soldiers or civilians, however, it is believed that most aboard the *Dix* when she sank were military men. The one civilian known to have been on the steamer, the correspondent A. M. Sanford, mentions only the First Louisiana Regiment as aboard in his account of the sinking, but he does seem to imply that civilians, also, were passengers. The C. Bailey listed in the *New Orleans Times* may have been Captain Clarence S. Bailey of the “Second Regiment Cavalry, 1st Louisiana Volunteers” (Official Army Register 1865: IV:1156). Muster rolls for the First Louisiana are extant and two names from these rolls can be matched with those listed in the newspaper (National Park Service 2001). “E.M. Jones” may have been Edward Jones and “W. Ray” may have been William D. Ray, both listed as privates in the First Louisiana. The other men named in the newspaper may have been crewmen on the steamer or civilian passengers. Why only these few men are listed in the newspaper is unknown, but it is possible that they were ill or had been injured in the sinking and, as a result, were carried back to New Orleans. It is presumed that the rest of the cavalymen aboard the lost steamer continued on up Red River to Shreveport with the remainder of their regiment. They were probably carried aboard the steamers accompanying the *Dix*, which included the *Emperor*, known to have reached Shreveport on June 26 (Hewitt 1996:439).

If conditions allowed, efforts would have been made to salvage the *Dix*, although no accounts of this have been found. Archaeological excavations of the wreck (see Chapter 4) recovered a large quantity of box and barrel parts in the hold of the boat, suggesting that little, if anything, inside of the steamer had been salvaged. Many of the containers recovered from the hold of the *Dix* were labeled as originating at the Quartermaster Depot in Jeffersonville,

Indiana, and marked with the date May 1865. These finds not only verify the identity of the wreck, but, also, substantiate that she was carrying government goods. However, items on the main deck, such as the engines, boilers, pumps, etc., may have been removed because they were valuable articles. Also, the personal equipment of the troopers, including their weapons, were probably kept close at hand and are likely to have been saved. What became of the men's horses is unknown.

With time, the cabin structure and, possibly, the paddlewheels of the *Ed. F. Dix* were broken up and removed by the fast-flowing Red River. How long this took is not known, but it could have happened immediately, possibly explaining why the *Iowa* struck just 8 days later. The Red River shifted slightly to the west, and what remained of the *Dix*, and the *Eastport*, was buried and, eventually, removed from view. With time, the *Ed. F. Dix* and the events of her loss, were largely forgotten, although the vessel which caused her sinking, the gunboat *Eastport*, was remembered.

Although the *Ed. F. Dix* vanished from view with her sinking, she did not immediately disappear from official records. Her owners, George Pegram and Henry Ealer, no doubt already upset over the seizure of their newly-refurbished boat, must have been horrified by her loss. Several months after the sinking, they made a claim for the loss of their steamboat to the government. The claim was received and reviewed by the Third Auditor's Office of the Treasury Department. As noted earlier, the principal file associated with this claim cannot be found, but the claim is referenced in peripheral documents.

On October 17, 1865, George Pegram and Henry Ealer presented a claim for \$70,000 for the loss of the *Ed. F. Dix*. Why it took so long for the two men to submit their claim is unknown. On October 23, A.M. Gangerver, Acting Auditor, wrote to Chief Quartermaster, Colonel C.G. Sawtelle, in New Orleans:

Sir, There has been filed in this office a claim for the steamer "EF Dix" sunk in the Red River near Montgomery Point, La, on the 23rd June last while in the military service of the United States under impressment made on the 30th May last by H.M (?) Perkins, Capt & AQM, New Orleans.

I have to request that you will inform me what disposition has been made of the wreck of

this steamer, and also furnish me with any information in your possession that will assist me in adjusting this claim [Gangerver to Sawtelle, October 23, 1865].

The following month, John Wilson, Third Auditor, and, apparently, the person ultimately responsible for handling the claim, wrote to General Canby asking for clarification of the government's use of the *Dix*. Wilson wrote:

Sir, I have before me for examination the claim of George Pegram and Henry C. Ealer for compensation for the value of the steamer "EF Dix" sunk in the Red River on the 23rd day of June 1865.

This boat was taken into the Government service on the 30th day of May 1865 by Capt. F.W. Perkins AQM of the city of New Orleans.

In determining the question of the liability of the US Government for the value of the said steamer, it becomes important to learn whether the action of Capt. Perkins was taken under your orders. I wish, therefore, to be informed whether he was authorized by you to seize the steamer "EF Dix" and whether it was understood by you, that the said boat was so seized and impressed against the wishes of the owners or the person representing them.

I will be obliged for information on the foregoing points as it will materially aid me in arriving at a [?] opinion, upon the merits of the claim presented by Messrs. Pegram and Ealer [Wilson to Canby November 10, 1865].

General Canby's response is unknown, but, presumably, it was in favor of Pegram and Ealer, because Auditor Wilson approved their claim, but not for the full \$70,000. On December 23, 1865, the two men were awarded a total of \$66,949.90 (National Archives, RG 217, Steamboat Award Certificates, File E-653). Issued as Award No. 116, \$47,962.42 went to George Pegram and \$15,987.48 went to Henry Ealer.

This was a very large award for the government to make for the loss of a steamboat. A review of claims paid by the government for vessels lost while in Quartermaster Department service during the Civil War ("List of Claims Paid for Vessels Lost in Civil War," Entry 653, Record Group 217, National Archives) reveals that this was the largest amount claimed and the largest amount paid for any vessel lost. The amount asked by Pegram and Ealer, \$70,000, was a

lot of money, particularly, in light of the fact that the *Ed. F. Dix* had originally been built for only \$35,000. The boat had been rebuilt just a month before her sinking, but it does seem unlikely that this work could have increased the steamer's value to the \$70,000 asked by her owners. The claim appears to have been for only the steamboat itself, this is implied in Auditor Wilson's letter to General Canby, plus it seems unlikely that the owners would have had any private cargo aboard that might have added to the amount of their loss. The large amount of the award might, in part, be explained by the inflationary conditions existing at the end of the Civil War. But it is also true that George Pegram and Henry Ealer were both very influential businessmen in St. Louis, with many political connections, and it is very likely that they used all of the influence they could to have their claim approved. Unfortunately, the file that would detail the elements and justifications for their claim cannot be found.

After receiving the \$66,949.90, Pegram and Ealer amended their claim, asking for an additional sum. The claimants filed "additional evidence" in November and December 1865 which supported some of the "accounts and vouchers" that had not been approved in the original claim (National Archives, RG 217, Steamboat Award Certificates, File E-653). Several months later, John Wilson approved this claim too, and seems to have turned the money over to H.L. Henry, the captain of the *Dix* when she sank, writing:

April 6th 1866

Capt. H.L. Henry
Present

Sir, Upon a full examination of the additional evidence filed by you in the case of the claim of George Pegram and Henry C. Ealer for the value of the steamer "EF Dix" lost while in the military service of the United States, I have allowed and awarded to them as additional to the award of this office of December 23, 1865, the sum of Three Thousand dollars, in full for all claims against the government for the said steamer, and have directed payment of the said amount as follows-to

George Pegram 3/4 \$2250
Henry C. Ealer 1/4 \$750

and both in your care.

I am sir
Yr Obdt Servt
John Wilson
Third Auditor
[Wilson to Henry April 6, 1866].

With this payment, the story of the *Ed. F. Dix* was at an end. For 130 years the remains of the steamboat lay buried with the gunboat *Eastport* beside the Red River, almost entirely forgotten, until rediscovered in the spring of 1995.